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by Francis X. Bacon

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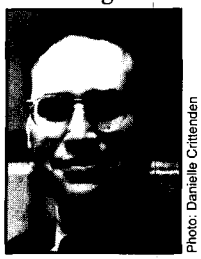

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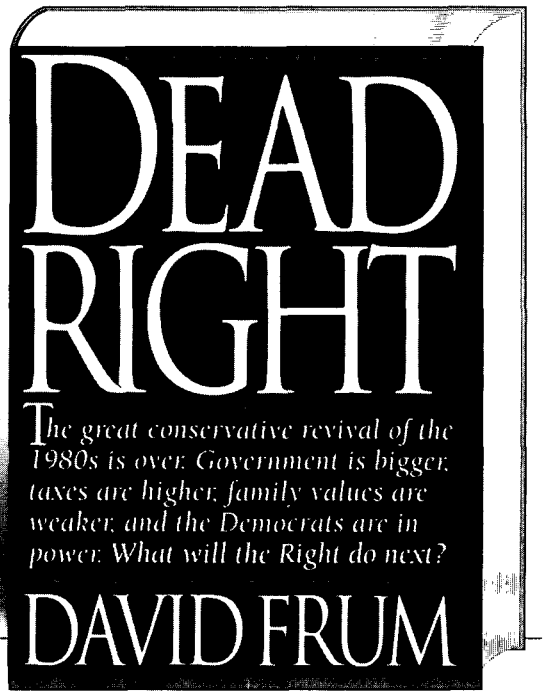
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DAVID FRUM

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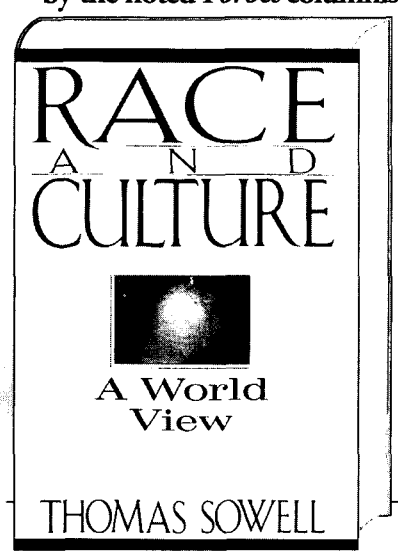

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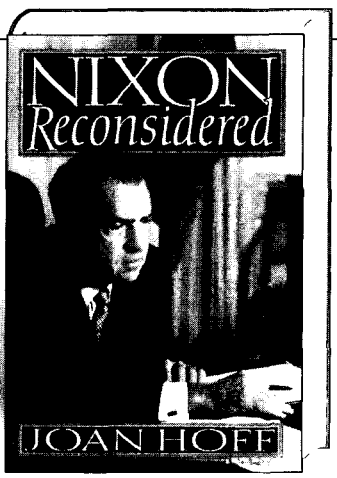

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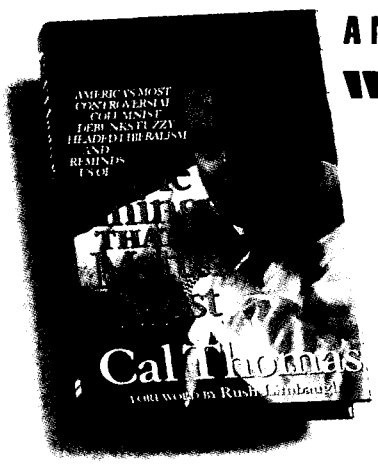

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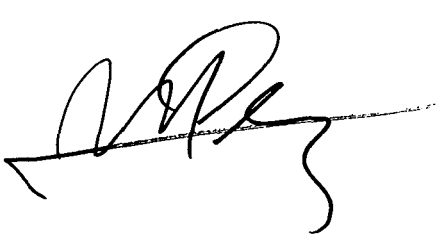
ABOUT THIS MONTH

by

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

THEY WERE CLICKING their heels over at the White House when O.J. Simpson broke the news coverage rushing record. But is it any consolation to the Dogpatch crowd that their man looks good only when juxtaposed with an alleged vicious and possibly deranged and drug-crazed murderer? And aren't they troubled by this recent endorsement of their boss —"You learn more about a guy in one round of golf than you'd learn doing business with him in a month. I didn't vote for him, but now I'm a big fan"—from none other than O.J. Simpson? The quote ran in *USA Today* on April 29, four weeks after Simpson had played eighteen holes with Clinton (and practiced with him for 30 minutes at the driving range) at the Del Mar Country Club in Coronado, California. The point isn't that an independent counsel should be appointed to investigate Clinton's possible links to the Brentwood murders; rather, it's that luck is a useless political commodity in the absence of any other. The White House will doubtless respond to inquiries aboutthe Clinton-Simpson meeting by pointing the finger at Jack Kemp, who just last January was the beneficiary of a luncheon hosted by Roger Staubach, John Mackey, and . . . O.J. Simpson. Still, as any reader of Grover G. Norquist's go-for-broke column this month might ask (see page 61): If you were running for Congress this fall, whose backing would you prefer, Clinton's or Kemp's?

AS JAMES RING ADAMS reminds us (see page 40), connections do indeed matter, especially if based on limelight-shunning efforts to corner the commodities market. In this case, the Clintons and their cattle-trading friends see themselves not so much as above the law as acting beside it, or going around it, or slipping under it. As for Mr. Clinton's signal contribution to constitutional theory—his insistence that his scamp behavior as governor cause him no political harm as president—it's finding little support from serious scholars. The exception is a certain Harvard professor who, as Jeremy A. Rabkin reports (see page 47), evidently hasn't given up hope that he might yet be allowed to board Mr. Clinton's sinking ship. Meanwhile, in an op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times* of June 24, New York lawyer George T. Conway III writes, "In a case involving his private conduct, a President should be treated like any private citizen." The *Times*, by the way, should have informed readers that Mr. Conway is a partner in Bernard Nussbaum's law firm. Doing so would certainly have stirred the political cauldron—and brought us closer to a Shakespearean resolution of this ghastly farce.



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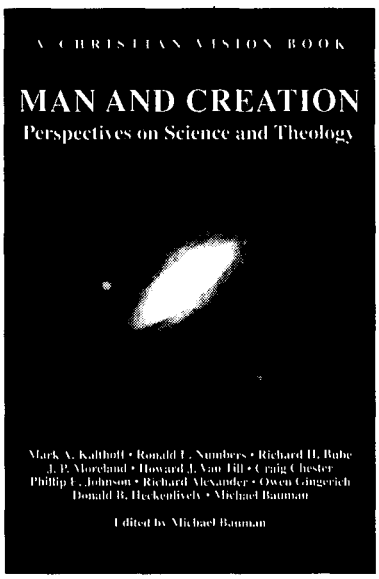
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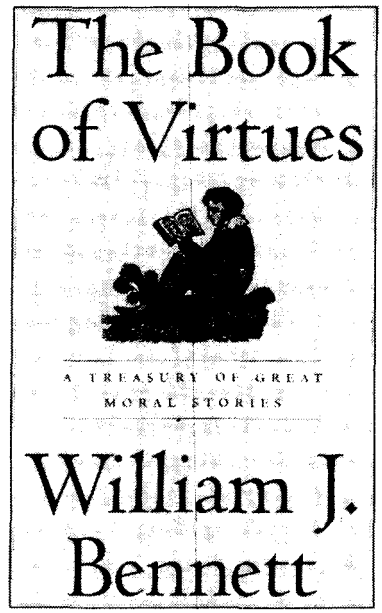

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Why would a Republican public relations powerhouse hire a prodigal child of Camelot as its Washington rainmaker?

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How disaster was turned into victory at Omaha Beach— and why nothing comparable could happen today.

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Is it surprising that Hillary's beef brokers went into business with BCCI—in which the privileged few won big and the disposable many lost badly?

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• June did not start off as a particularly interesting month—and then the gods smiled on us. At center stage stood President Bill Clinton, the man liberal policy wonks call the best president we have had in years. Then right next to him appeared former president Jimmy Carter, the man liberals praise for unexcelled saintliness. Immediately they commenced to slam each other with animal bladders. Jimmy lit a match under Bill's clodhopper. Bill pulled Jimmy's baggy pantaloons to the floor. Then they both skipped around in a circle squeezing their bicycle horns and heaving confetti.

• The occasion for the high jinks from these two titans of the modern presidency was statecraft with North Korea's aging Stalinist, Mr. Kim Il Sung. Jimmy somehow turned up in Pyongyang on June 17. Bill seemed pleased. Then Jimmy announced American foreign policy toward North Korea in terms more concrete than Bill thought admissible. Bill got mad. Then Mr. Kim Il Sung seemed pleased with Jimmy. Then Bill seemed pleased. Jimmy returned to the White House depicting the North Korean despot as "an honest statesman committed to a peaceful reconciliation with his neighbors," to quote the *New York Times*. No one laughed.

• And did Mr. O.J. Simpson give us our money's worth or what? On June 17, rather than simply turn himself in on charges of having murdered his ex-wife and her friend, the former football great and TV personality absconded in a white Bronco accompanied by Mr. Al Cowlings, his George Stephanopoulos. The two led an escadrille of Los Angeles Police Department along Los Angeles freeways in a post–Rodney King chase. The highest standards of decorum were maintained. Never was the speed limit broken. Never were the police anything but polite and agreeable. Mr. Cowlings carefully switched on the warning lights and always used his turning signals. Mr. Simpson's breezy suicide notes—models of California insouciance—had already been read when the cops spotted Mr. Simpson cruising along with a gun to his skull. Overhead seven choppers filmed the procession as thousands of Angeleno sports fans and assorted pinheads cheered on the accused murderer. They were even at the gates of his home, along with scores of suave and ingratiating *polizie*, when Mr. Simpson's faithful Stephanopoulos parked their Bronco in the drive. Then commenced negotiations to dissuade the famed ballplayer from suicide and bring him into custody.

• Through the entire 90-minute drive Mr. Cowlings had kept in close cellular communications with the planet earth, furiously slamming the telephone down only when an insensitive police operator failed to grasp his well-known name. According to Mr. Cowlings, who by the end of June was to be one of the ten most famous men in all California—and one of the most respected—Mr. Simpson's state of mind by late Friday night was agitated. He wanted to talk to his "mom." He wanted to use the facilities. After that he wanted a glass of orange juice. Then he was jugged, and so was the illustrious Mr. Cowlings.

• The press billed Mr. Simpson's embarrassment as a unique American tragedy, but is it all that unique? Let's face it: similar catastrophe could at any time befall any of a dozen media stars. Think of Al Hunt or Larry King or John McLaughlin. Can you not envisage any one of these TV superstars riding the freeways of Los Angeles, gun in hand, suicide note broadcast to all mankind, as, say, Michael Kinsley drives the Bronco. Okay, so maybe not a Bronco. How about a Volvo? At any rate, on June 20, Mr. Simpson, after a quiet weekend in the calaboose, pled not guilty to murder. By then the battle lines were drawn. Some Americans argued that Mr. Simpson was a typical American husband, indistinguishable from millions of other middle-class fathers and husbands in his homicidal tendencies. That was the position taken by Health and Human Resources secretary Mrs. Donna Shalala on the ABC evening news. Others thought Mr. Simpson innocent. Still others spoke of a conspiracy that had been perpetrated against him led perhaps by the Mafia, the Kennedys, and the powerful managers of Ace Hardware stores nationwide.

• In a vehicular protest reminiscent of those French farmers who drove their tractors on Paris some years back, or of the Hells Angels who once descended on rural towns in the American Midwest, hundreds of homeless protesters in San Francisco formed a caravan of shopping carts to protest Mayor Frank Jordan's policy of removing vagrants from sidewalks as soon as

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they begin to look and smell like pet droppings. The mayor's program has attracted the disapproval of the ACLU, which, incidentally, approves of urban bans against pets defecating in public but not against humans—at least not those humans who are sufficiently unkempt and in the possession of stolen shopping carts. The unconscionable pogrom waged by American reformers against cigarette smokers has claimed another life. In Casa Grande, Arizona, Mr. Melvin Deball, 56, perished after lunging through a window of a moving Greyhound Bus when its driver refused to stop for a smoking break.

• The legendary patience and hardiness of the adult Korean was demonstrated anew when a month-long search for Korean tourist Mr. Young Moon Kim, 46, ended joyously in Gardena, California. Mr. Kim, who speaks no English, waited quietly on the corner of Van Ness Avenue and El Segundo Boulevard for three weeks before being recognized as the missing tourist. No one knows how Mr. Kim derived sustenance during his ordeal, though when he was finally identified his collar button was open and tie was down. Doubtless the California State Tourist Bureau is even now mounting a vast public relations campaign to proclaim the peaceful and secure purlieus surrounding the corner of Van Ness Avenue and El Segundo Boulevard. Think of it. For three weeks Mr. Kim just stood there. No one stole his wallet or shot him or attempted to put him in a pot and eat him! Governor Pete Wilson can well be proud. In Boston, Massachusetts, Mr. Talal Alzanki's defense that he believed his Sri Lankan maid, Miss Vasantha Gedara, 27, to be a pet rock has failed. Mr. Alzanki has been sentenced to imprisonment and ordered to pay his maid back pay of $13, 415 after he was convicted of enslavement. In Tehran, Iran, head stabbing has been banned even if the head being stabbed is one's own. In Baltimore, Maryland, three occupants of a row house were hospitalized for psychiatric observation after more than sixty dogs, cats, hamsters, and birds were discovered in their domicile. Authorities have yet to weigh the possibility that the three were about to open a restaurant.

• It was an ill wind that enveloped the podium at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California, as the esteemed Professor Leonard Orguin delivered a clever commencement address. The prof was endeavoring to strike yet another blow against the Republic's flagitious practices of racism, sexism, and lookism by ironically noting the distinguishing features of certain races and ethnic groupings when a mischievous breeze blew away the last pages of his speech and the witless dope was unable to explain that his was an essay into Swiftian poesy. Thus he swanked on about how in his bourgeois youth he had believed that Oriental people have difficulty seeing through slanted eyes. He declaimed to a black student in the audience that God had left her in the coloring machine too long, he told an Asian that God neglected to give her people noses. Then the idiot vacated the podium to give his imitation of black people walking, or "wiggling and jiggling" as he put it. Alas, when he returned to the podium his notes were gone and he was stuck there in front of 5,000 agape attendees who were wondering if he was a bigot or just the standard-issue academic fool. Serves him right.

—RET

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Ms. Manners

I am the product of a very large, venerable family of attorneys, including my grandfather, father, uncles, brother, and cousins. One of my uncles was a judge advocate at Nuremberg who wrote a book on courtroom manners. My aunt Helen, an elegant spinster who ran with the lower echelons of European royalty, spent most of her middle years rapping my knuckles with a ruler because I could not master Beethoven to her satisfaction. As a child, if someone threw a rock at me at recess, my mother made me write a thank-you note. I was the only toddler who attended the St. Louis Municipal Opera wearing white gloves. I was not allowed to sell Girl Scout cookies because my parents thought that it was commercially crass.

In short, all my life I have worked very hard to create an impression of style, grace, and dignity. And now you come along and in one thoughtless magazine article ("The Travelgate Cover-Up," by David Brock, *TAS*, June 1994), call me "garish" and "tacky"—and all I can say is thank you! Thank you! Thank you! If your sales are bigger than usual this month, it is probably because I have bought up so many copies to send to all my friends. Thanks again for making my week!

—Linda Bloodworth-Thomason
Mozark Productions

Include Me Out

I have subscribed to *The American Spectator* for a number of years, but I can no longer do so. In the past, I looked forward to and enjoyed your strongly partisan but rational and intellectually based articles and positions.

Alas, since the election of President Clinton, your journal has become clinically obsessed with him and his wife. Your articles on them have sunk to the level of gutter journalism. Surely there exist enough differences grounded on facts and intellectually based points of view with which to take issue with the present administration. It is certainly not necessary to engage in innuendo, character assassination, and questionable allegations, which only demean your journal and the positions you espouse.

Finally, I find it offensive and intolerable that in your pathological attacks on our president, you diminish the office of the president with unhealthy consequences. The next president, even if he is more to your liking, will be crippled and stained as a result of your unbridled attacks. Your actions hurt our country and poison the political processes which have sustained us so well for so long.

I am saddened and disappointed at the course your journal has taken, do not count me a subscriber any more.

—Isaac Green
Washington, D.C.

Take Cover!

We watched "The Clintons at Normandy Show" on TV this morning. I remarked to my husband that all Hillary needed was a *pointed hat* for that outfit she was wearing!

The mail arrived at noon—there was Hillary on the cover of June's *American Spectator*.

Priceless!

—Helen S. Robins
Santa Rosa, California

The picture of Hillary Clinton on the cover was, well, nothing short of extraordinary, a true work of insidious genius. Give the artist a bonus.

—George W. Steffen
Valparaiso, Indiana

No Party to the Party

The statement in Kenneth S. Lynn's review of *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition* by Michael Wreszin, that *Partisan Review* when it first began ". . . had been financed by the [Communist] Party" (page 57, *TAS*, June 1994), is false and probably libelous. Of course, Mr. Lynn has taken the information from the book itself. The author of the book did not bother to check the facts with me.

—William Phillips
Editor, Partisan Review
Boston, Massachusetts

Selling the Rope

First the bouquets. You deserve praise for your coverage of what really happened in Whitewatergate. Your articles are more informative and less biased than those elsewhere.

However, after reading "Decontrol Freaks" by Michael Ledeen and Stephen Bryen (*TAS*, June 1994), I am dusting off my brickbat. I had to check the cover to see if *TAS* hadn't been renamed "Xenophobia" or "Techno-illiteracy."

The authors make many baseless assertions but I can distill the article down to its essential premises: computers are tantamount to munitions, technology changes slowly, decontrol will lead to loss of American market share, and Silicon Valley is in bed with Washington. I'll take these points in this order.

The authors repeatedly justify the export controls on computers by calling them "deadly technologies." This view is false for two reasons. A computer can only do what it's programmed to do. Unless we export our weapons-design software, our enemies will not be able to design weapons. And access to a high-power computer—even with software—does not a high-tech weapon make. Third World nations are incapable of building them anyway. They don't have the expert scientists, engineers, industrial plant, or much else.

Ledeen and Bryen seem surprised that we have decontrolled microprocessors "more advanced than those deployed by American forces in the Gulf War." That war occurred during the early nineties. With typical military development schedules, the weapons in use then had (at best) mid-eighties technology in them. But computing power *doubles* every two years.

The authors claim that decontrolling technology exports will hand the market to Japan, Inc. This requires one to accept either that computers aren't changing rapidly or that there is a significant market for obsolete equipment. One must also pretend that Japan won't have access to export-controlled technology anyway. And one must have faith that if we don't sell certain technologies, Japan won't either. In the absence of new regulations and new taxes, we will continue to lead as we have. . . .

The computer industry doesn't want or need a patronizing Uncle for protection. . . . If John Sculley is influential in Washington, it is because government has (and often uses) the power to either crush a business or grant it riches. . . .

Of course Mr. Sculley lobbied to

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repeal export regulations in order to improve his business. The authors are arrogant indeed to claim superior understanding of an industry to one of its captains. Mr. Sculley and others have billions invested in the industry. Therefore unlike most other people their opinions must be carefully considered. . . .

—Keith Weiner, President
Diamond Ware Software Developers
New City, New York

During the last years of the Communist bloc I was engaged in exporting computer equipment to East European countries, mostly Czechoslovakia, and I am intimately familiar with what was happening with U.S. computer exports there. While I'm certainly no friend of the Clinton administration, I must say that the assertion in "Decontrol Freaks" that export controls were an effective tool against the East Bloc countries during the Cold War is patently false. The controls were very effective at stifling legal U.S. exports to both Eastern and Western Europe, but didn't deny the Communists access to U.S. technology, which was the stated goal. Consider the following:

• In Eastern Europe, during the Cold War, there was never a debate over the question of "guns or butter"; guns won every time. When embargoed computer equipment could be found in the civilian sector, one could be sure that the military had all that they wanted. I was frequently chagrined to find embargoed U.S. and Western manufactured computer equipment in most if not all of the industrial computer sites that I visited in Czechoslovakia. This was especially frustrating for me as the German company I was working for at the time carefully complied with both the spirit and letter of the export control laws. In complying with the law, we frequently found that we could not compete in the market. Smuggling of newer, more desirable high technology equipment was rampant, and we lost most of our sales to these law breakers.

• Nearly all major manufacturers found ways around the embargo. The most innovative was IBM. IBM controlled the export regulations by dominating the U.S. Department of Commerce policy advisory committees. During most of the Cold War, the DOC measured computer performance by "processing data rate" (PDR). This PDR figure could not be found in computer literature anywhere, but it existed in the export control regulations. This number, as calculated by the DOC formula, so favored the IBM computer architecture as to give IBM a better than 10 to 1 advantage. In practice, IBM could get an export license for a mainframe computer, while hobby equipment such as the Commodore Amega was prohibited. I know that this sounds incredible, but I can easily document that this was exactly the case.

• The DOC knew that the export controls were totally ineffective and admitted it to me on numerous occasions in private. . . . Congress also knew that the export controls didn't work, as I was once interviewed by a committee from the General Accounting Office. They were trying to find out how the Eastern Europeans were so easily circumventing the embargo. (This interview—at the GAO's request—took place in the office of the commercial attaché at the American consulate in Frankfurt, Germany.)

• The Russian navy obtained the critical know-how and equipment to manufacture nearly silent submarine propellers during this period. The Japanese (Hitachi) supplied the four-axis computer controlled milling equipment and Norway (Konsberg) supplied the computers. . . .

—Ron Vincent
Carthage, Mississippi

The problem with "Decontrol Freaks" was comparing the high-tech giveaway policies of the Bush and Clinton administrations without emphasizing this critical distinction: Bush was imprudent; Clinton is a traitor.

As the article points out, the Bush administration decontrolled our high-technology mostly due to pressure from "friendlier" Soviet leadership. Clinton, in his campaign, recognized Bush's mistake, but has continued the decontrol policy to fill the pockets of Apple's John Sculley.

Nothing to my mind stands out more about President Clinton than his willingness to dole out benefactions at the expense of the national interest, solely to aggrandize his own political position. . . .

—Forrest A. Nabors
Portland, Oregon

Michael Ledeen and Stephen Bryen reply: Mr. Weiner says there's nothing to worry about from Third World nations because they "don't have the scientists, engineers, industrial plant or much else." Apparently Mr. Weiner lives in a world different from the one we live in, because we see numerous Third World nations building weapons of mass destruction (and accompanying delivery systems), thanks to First World scientists and engineers who are handsomely paid for their time and knowledge, and thanks to First World countries that adopt the sort of policy Mr. Weiner advocates: sell them whatever they want, and be happy. President Clinton, who is a big fan of Mr. Weiner's sort of policy, has now made it possible for Third World killers to get even bigger and better weapons.

It is quite true that computers will only do what their programmers tell them to do, and that is why we should keep high-powered computers out of the hands of programmers who are likely to tell them to do bad things.

Mr. Vincent is quite wrong about how the American government worked when serious export controls still existed. Commerce was not the dominant force—Defense fixed the technical limits—and all decisions on things like computers were made internationally in COCOM. Mr. Vincent says that IBM got a 10-to-1 advantage over its competitors, but in fact in the 1980s IBM sold very little in the Soviet bloc because most of its products exceeded the COCOM limits. Working for a German company, Mr. Vincent should have known this.

The efficacy of the export controls is quite easily proved. The Soviets were never able to progress much beyond medium-scale integration of their semiconductors, which is roughly a mid-1970s technology. They stalled because the needed manufacturing equipment was controlled. By the late 1980s, the Soviet semiconductor gap with the United States had reached nearly ten years, with little hope of recovery.

Had export controls failed, the preponderance of numbers on the Soviet side would surely have given it a decisive advantage in the balance of military power. Instead, thanks in large part to the success of export controls, it fell hopelessly behind in several crucial areas of military power. This in turn contributed mightily to the failure of will that brought an end to the Soviet Empire.

Garbage In, Guns Out

I would like to respond to Mark Yost's article ("Gun Racket," *TAS*, June 1994). Having studied the 317 weapons turned in

(continued on page 79)

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Houston Democrats

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

One of the conveniences that Republicans have in choosing their candidates is the presence in American politics of the Avuncular Democrat. It is this public-spirited and stupendously disinterested moral arbiter who has time and again saved the GOP from the extremism that apparently forever lurks in the heart of the party of Coolidge, Hoover, Eisenhower! Yes, the Republicans have come up with many mild fellows, but there are those dangerous extremists just behind the potted plants, and conscientious Democrats are always at the ready to admonish the Republicans against this extremism that could kill them at the polls.

Right now the Democrats are selflessly warning Republicans of the danger posed to them by the Christian Right! These dangerous Christians have taken over the Republican Party of Texas. In Virginia their Anglo-Saxon popes from hill and dale have made Oliver North a candidate for the Senate. Through him they could contaminate the entire U.S. Senate—even Ted Kennedy and Bob Packwood! Did I say Anglo-Saxon popes? Yes I did, for history seems to have again come full circle. The Democratic sophisticates who warn us of the conspiracies of the Christian Right speak in terms very reminiscent of the rustic 100-percent Americans of yore who warned the Republic of conspiracies being perpetrated by the Pope and his urban hordes of hyphenates in the 1920s to take over the Democratic Party and turn America into the Holy Roman Empire.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but the prissy shrieks of the Democrats against what they call the Christian Right reveal them for precisely what they are, reactionaries. Notwithstanding all their poetry about Change, their actions reveal that the only change they want is a return to 1976 and government distribution of wealth and red tape. True to their reactionary politics, the Democrats want to exclude from politics those who disagree with them. Thus they have come up with this frightening fantasy about the Christian Right being the most current edition of GOP extremism.

Well, it is the Democratic Party whose leading minority activists welcome the presence of the Jew-baiting, Catholic-baiting Rev. Farrakhan. Such a party is not a very trustworthy monitor of extremism. Truth be known, the Democrats have been hospitable to a far wider array of fanatics than have the Republicans whom they insist we keep an eye on. The Republicans may be the party most likely to turn up anti-abortion candidates, but the Democratic Party is actually tyrannized by the pro-abortion activists. So thoroughly are the Democrats dominated by the pro-abortion movement that in their last national convention they barred the anti-abortion Democratic governor of Pennsylvania from even delivering a speech. Doubtless they would give a Baptist minister the same short shrift. I suppose one should not be surprised that the party that attempts to embrace militant homosexuals, militant feminists, animal rights loonies, and other exotics would identify fundamentalist Christians as beyond the pale.

Not only is extremism less of a threat in the Republican Party but the Republicans also contain more diversity. This June, as the Republicans of Virginia nominated that Bible-pounding, moralistic opponent of abortion Ollie North,

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times *column syndicated by Creators Syndicate.*

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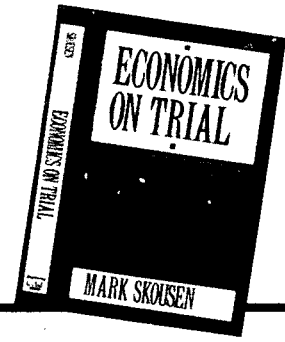
THE BOOK CAMPUS LIBERALS FEAR THE MOST



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— Prof. Paul Samuelson, MIT

You send your children away to an expensive, prestigious university, and they come back home telling you . . .

- **Capitalism is destroying the planet.**
- **The rich aren't paying their fair share.**
- **Marx was a misunderstood genius.**
- **The government ought to provide universal health care and guarantee everyone a job.**

Sadly, most campuses are filled with ultra-liberal professors who transform students (your children and future voters!) into anti-capitalist radicals. Polls indicate that over 80% of all college graduates consider themselves "liberals" or "radical liberals" — a direct result of the brainwashing they get from their teachers.

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Dr. Mark Skousen, economics professor at Rollins College, tears up Paul Samuelson's famous textbook. "Students deserve better!"

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Students who use *Economics on Trial* have seen dramatic results. One student at Princeton University pointed out an error in an economics class and confounded the professor. Another student gave a copy of the book to his instructor that totally changed his way of teaching.

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the Republicans of California nominated Congressman Michael Huffington to oppose Senator Barbara Feinstein. Huffington is pro-choice. He has adopted moderate positions on homosexuals in the military. He favors arts subsidies—though not extravagant, and not beyond the scrutiny of representative government.

Like North, Huffington is for limited government and lower taxes. Thus the Avuncular Democrats are against him. They do not say they oppose him on these issues. Instead they resort to their old weapons: fear and class discrimination. They raise the frightening specter of his considerable wealth. They say he is willing to buy the election with his millions. They do not confront his claim that a man of Huffington's wealth and probity is less likely to be bought than Senator Feinstein, who, though immensely wealthy herself, is sufficiently miserly to accept vast contributions from the special-interest lobbies Huffington has spurned. Perhaps it is about time that the electorate recognize that the Democrats' admonitions against Republican extremism have been inane for decades. Moreover, in recent years it has been those crying wolf over "extremism" who have usually been jarringly extreme. ❐

Turning on the Juice

O.J. Simpson's week of infamy careened into the phony jurisdictions of the noisiest charlatans in the country. It is only a matter of time, then, before his abominations will have elicited more absurd pronouncements than the Cold War.

Already the preposterous Anna Quindlen in the *New York Times* has yawped that Simpson's "is the story of a man who, like many, many other men, beat up his wife and didn't think there was anything the least bit wrong with it." Well, the latest statistics available from the Bureau of the Census record that in 1991 there were 123 million males in the country, so "many, many" is a lot of wife beaters who "didn't think there was anything the least bit wrong with it." Actually, as Laurence Jarvik of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture pointed out in the *Times* a couple of months back, Department of Justice National Crime Survey statistics demonstrate that "wife-beating is relatively uncommon compared with other forms of violence against women." And would Miss Quindlen like to join with us law-and-order types and "get tough" with violent criminals? More prisons, more cops, quicker sentencing, longer sentencing, capital punishment? Somewhere a few words back I think we lost Miss Quindlen.

Someone by the name of Mariah Burton Nelson in the same issue of the *Times* has let out a shout about how commonplace it is for athletes to beat their wives. She is the author of *The Stronger Women Get, the More Men Love Football,* doubtless a sociological classic. Perhaps it is owing to this original scholarship that she makes even more expansive statements than Quindlen. Miss Nelson seems to oppose sports in general, as well as boys, and perhaps girls. She says, "society's concept of violence is inextricably interwoven with its concept of expected, condoned male behavior. Boys are given boxing gloves as toys, girls and women who try to join wrestling or football teams are often ridiculed, sexually harassed or simply barred from taking part."

Incidentally, if you are looking for a thread of logic here or even a salient point, forget it. As with the other charlatans who exploit the various decadent movements once deemed progressive, Miss Nelson is disciplined by neither logic, nor the meanings of words, nor orderly argumentation. She has no point other than some vague disapproval of athletics, traditional American society, and men, particularly self-sufficient men. As Simpson's court appearances accumulate, she will be joined in her pontifications by all the other charlatans. The black militants will have their say and the white militants just behind the arras. We shall hear from the critics of capitalism and of advertising. Doubtless even the militant homosexual will find an angle radiating ominous wisdom. And there has to be an environmentalist twist to the O.J. Simpson saga.

Of course, all the charlatans can hang their pontifications on some nub of truth. There is too much violence in our society. As manners and the code of the gentleman retreat—often under the assault of the so-called progressives—society has become intolerably coarse. Sports stars are indeed exalted to idiotic heights. As the detumescent Simpson is revealing daily, sports stars, especially sports stars who have demonstrated no special attachment to virtue—are not all that special. They can run and jump, but so can horses and dogs. High intellect, artistic creativity, character displayed in adversity, are all more admirable than the feats of animals. That is why, through the ages, art has been more admired than sport.

Simpson should have been jailed after his first conviction for battery. Then he should have lost all endorsements. By that point he had proved himself exemplary of nothing worthwhile. He was by then, however, exemplary of the recklessness of certain modern American men and women. They take family and divorce lightly. They take their pleasures absurdly seriously. They frivol with the deepest human passions and then are astounded when things turn out badly. They are what Richard Weaver called moral idiots. I shall not be surprised in the course of Simpson's trial to hear that both he and the men and women of his set indulged in extensive drug use and promiscuity. That violence and murder followed should surprise no one. Dostoevsky wrote vividly of it, as did Conrad and other great chroniclers of human tragedy, and not one of those writers could outrun his dog. ❐

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Property and Tyranny

by Tom Bethell

In the 1980's, Peggy Reigle was vice president of finance for the *New York Daily News*. But she grew tired of battling printers' and drivers' unions and so she retired with her husband to a farm in Cambridge, Maryland. One day her neighbors, an elderly couple from West Virginia, came to her for help. They had invested their life-savings in a 44-acre parcel and planned to sell one half in order to build a house on the other half. A few months earlier, the federal bureaucracy had issued new "wetland" regulations, covering two-thirds of Dorchester County, including the couple's entire property. If they built anything at all they would probably go to prison. "Stroke of a pen," Peggy Reigle said. She couldn't believe it at first. "Not in America," she thought. That was in the summer of 1990.

When she heard about dozens of similar cases across the country, she came out of retirement and went to war on behalf of the expropriated. She started the Fairness to Land Owners Committee, which publishes a newsletter and now has 15,000 members in all fifty states. About 90 percent of the members have been subjected to "wetlands abuse," she estimates. The Endangered Species Act has also given rise to serious invasions of property rights, but it "pales by comparison with wetlands." Reigle estimates that she works with between 250 and 275 other property-rights groups across the country, and many of them put out newsletters and "action alerts."

This is the property-rights movement. It has come in waves, starting with the organizing efforts of Chuck Cushman, who founded the National Inholders Association (an inholder is an owner of private property within or surrounded by federal property). Then came Ron Arnold's Wise Use movement, based in Western states, which promotes the continued use of resources on federal lands (mining, logging, ranching). The most recent impetus has come from the Endangered Species Act, and from George Bush's wetlands folly. Myron Ebell, the Washington representative of the American Land Rights Association, told me that "we have about 800 groups on our fax list." Overall, he believes that there may be as many as 1,200 groups. All this gives us an idea of the severity of the federal assault on property rights in recent years.

Environmentalists have periodically sought to denigrate the property rights movement as a child of big business, perhaps some kind of an Exxon spin-off, but the truth is that it is the environmentalists who are funded by big business (also big foundations, of course). Modern corporate philanthropy would hardly dare touch anything so bold as the defense of property rights. Leafing through a 1993 issue of *Nature Conservancy* magazine one day, Myron Ebell came across a clue as to why this should be so. An article headlined "Corporate America Turns on to the Environment" included the quote: "Like Dow, DuPont believes its efforts yield indirect economic benefits. 'Since we are good neighbors, we are allowed to continue making products,' says DuPont's Megan Burns." DuPont, allowed to stay in business! This suggests what many suspect—that the law is so ill-defined and environmentalists so influential that prudent corporations make contributions to them in order to avoid lawsuits.

Private property decentralizes power, and so it is fitting that the property-rights movement has no central direction or figurehead leader. "It is pretty much a grass roots movement, which is a problem, because it means there's no silver bullet," said the W. Alton Jones Foundation's Debra Callahan in a speech to the Environmental Grantmakers Association. If the property-rights movement has leaders, Peggy Reigle is certainly one of them. Her most recent newsletter has been making waves on Capitol Hill because it urged congressmen to support a particular bill reauthorizing the Clean Water Act. The bill would actually define wetlands, which is something that Congress has not yet bothered to do.

The increasing extremism of environmental regulation has caused the de facto seizure of a great deal of property all over the country, forestalling billions of dollars worth of economic activity. The regulations have also led to the unjust imprisonment of several people. Here is just one example, reported in Reigle's newsletter:

On May 15, 1989, Ocie Mills and his son Carey entered a federal prison to serve a 21-month sentence as environmental criminals. In building a home for his son, Ocie placed nineteen loads of clean builder's sand in a dry ditch on a small lot in Florida. The federal government said it was a wetland. Carey's crime was that his name was on the title deed. They were in prison for nineteen months. Ocie defended himself, but the trial exhausted the family's savings and they were forced to rent out their home and move into a trailer. Ocie's wife depended on neighbors for food and assistance during his incarceration. Making Freedom of Information requests from behind bars, Ocie found the probable cause of his treatment: an Army Corps of Engineers colonel was annoyed at his "highly publicized" and "documented furnishing of advice to others with intent to subvert the Corps Regulatory Program," and so recommended that he "be prosecuted criminally." He was. Later a federal district court judge concluded that the lot "probably was never a wetland."

The wetlands police, mostly employed by the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, have all along operated without a license

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from Congress. These agencies expanded their own jurisdiction administratively, with an assist from the federal judiciary, and of course did so under the somnolent eye of Republican presidents. Current law derives from the Clean Water Act of 1972, which applied to rivers and did not mention "wetlands" at all. Its language bears no resemblance to its present interpretation. Then, in 1975, a federal judge ruled that the act applied not just to rivers but to wetlands that drain into them. Taking the advice of his future EPA administrator, William K. Reilly, George Bush promised in 1988 that if he was elected there would be "no net loss of wetlands."

The effect was to ratify the stealthy expansion of wetlands that had already taken place. The Corps of Engineers and the EPA were ready with new regulations a few weeks after Bush was sworn in. "Wetlands" had by now doubled in area and most of the added areas were on private property. Lands could be classified as "wetlands" if they were dry for 350 days a year, and if they were as small as puddles. Robert J. Pierce of the Army Corps of Engineers, who had helped write the "Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands," declared that "for regulatory purposes, a wetland is whatever we decide it is."

The constitutional fig leaf has been the interstate commerce clause. Geese flying overhead are "interstate waterfowl" and while in flight might glance down and spot an enticing puddle—20 feet by 20 feet would be sufficient to satisfy the EPA. Even "Saturday Night Live" might think twice about a parody along such lines. In 1992, Federal Judge Daniel Manion boldly struck down the "glancing geese" test, but the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals reaffirmed it. Meanwhile, Bill Ellen, a conservationist who ran a rescue/rehab mission for injured waterfowl, was sent to the federal penitentiary in Petersburg, Virginia, for six months, for the crime of creating a wildlife sanctuary, thereby disturbing wetlands. "Ellen knowingly filled wetlands without any federal authorization," said assistant U.S. Attorney Jane Barrett, who helped prosecute him. "It was a premeditated environmental crime."

Congress still had said nothing about wetlands. Last August, the Clinton administration responded to this oversight by urging Congress "to amend the Clean Water Act to make it consistent with the agencies' rule-making." In his new book, *Lost Rights: The Destruction of American Liberty*,[1] James Bovard observes that Clinton thereby

> sought to codify the nature of modern government: Congress as a tail being wagged by the federal bureaucracy. In earlier eras, the statement that federal agencies were imposing burdens and restriction on private landowners that were not justified by federal law would be a confession that the government was violating people's rights. But nowadays, it is simply a technicality requiring a few words from Congress to retroactively sanctify the actions of lawless bureaucrats.

I would like to go out of my way to recommend this remarkable book—400 densely packed pages about the mounting war on property and contract, the tyranny of taxation, and the growth of federal power in the guise of expanding our rights. In this field, Bovard is surely the leading researcher in the country. On the subject at hand, here is a characteristically brilliant paragraph:

> While EPA and the Army Corps have heavily fined many farmers for wetlands violations, the U.S. Department of Agriculture followed a different wetlands policy. Keith Bjerke, a high-ranking USDA official, gave North Dakota farmers explicit permission in 1989 to drain 6500 acres of swampland in order to expand their crop acreage. While the EPA was sending people to prison for filling a quarter-acre of wetlands, USDA—by promising farmers lavish subsidies for future crops—effectively underwrote the destruction of thousands of acres of wetlands. Federal farm price subsidies far above market prices provide a strong incentive for farmers to produce more crops than they otherwise would. . . . Price supports and strict import quotas are the main reason why sugar is still produced in Florida—and sugar production is the main reason why the Everglades are being poisoned, with the loss of thousands of acres of wetlands each year. But it is easier for politicians to send federal agencies on vendettas against landowners than to end the gravy train for selected campaign contributors.

[1] St. Martin's Press, 335 pages, $24.95.

Legislative authorization for the Clean Water Act has now expired, and a 600-page reauthorization bill, which would only make things worse, co-sponsored by Senators Max Baucus and John Chafee, has emerged from committee. But it is not expected to get any further. A House bill supported by property-rights defenders, compensating landowners who are affected by wetlands regulations, also seems to be stymied. In effect, the rise of the property rights movement has led to an impasse on Capitol Hill. Environmentalists are unable to pass new laws making things worse, and property-rights advocates aren't strong enough to make them better. The Endangered Species Act is caught in just such a vise. The two sides are strong enough to ensure that the act is neither strengthened nor weakened.

A property measure to write into law a "takings implications assessment," comparable to environmental impact statements, has made headway. It was opposed by Janet Reno, but, says Myron Ebell, "the killer was a letter from Defense Secretary Perry saying that he won't be able to defend the country if he also has to defend property rights." Bills to elevate the Environmental Protection Agency to Cabinet level, and to authorize a National Biological Survey, are also blocked. The latter is the child of Bruce Babbitt, who has single-handedly revived the "Sagebrush Rebellion" in the Western states.

The legislative impasse could mean more environmental outrages and a further growth of the property-rights movement. But Ebell issues a warning: it's a race against time. Western ranchers feel threatened by grazing-fee increases because certificates of deposit already offer a better rate of return than cattle. "In the Western states, there are lots of crossroads communities that are barely hanging on," Ebell said. "If the environmentalists can get rid of the loggers, the ranchers and the miners, they will have turned those states into Democratic strongholds." Sen. Harry Reid won in Nevada even though he lost everywhere except for Las Vegas and Reno. As for a prospective Republican majority in the Senate, John Chafee (Environment) and Mark Hatfield (Appropriations) would become committee chairmen. Philosophically, they are indistinguishable from Democrats. ❐

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The Tragedy of Macdeth

by Francis X. Bacon

Francis X. Bacon is a writer living in Vatican City.

ACT I

Scene I—*A heath in Arkansas.*

[*Enter* MACDETH *and* LYONS, *jogging*]

MACDETH
How now, my gentle Lyons, what's o'clock?

LYONS
My liege, the moon our sister Artemis,
like a T-cell new ruptured
by plaguy ill-bred pathogen hath done
dismissed herself from the field of play.
[*Pushes button on wristwatch*] Six-thirty.

MACDETH
Then let us canny falconers uncage
our Reeboks to th'unruly winds and speed
on wings of Taiwan-sculpted rubber hence,
lest time should turn our stomachs cuckold
and torpor the McBreakfast Special cheat.

[*Enter three* WITCHES]

Yet stand I traitor to mine eyes or they
to me, who credit not their troth?
For these appear not women, nay, nor men,
but antecedents of the pronoun s/he—
three Deans of Gender Studies, it would seem,
the very substance of delirium.

1st WITCH
Hail, Macdeth, all hail to the chief!

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2nd WITCH
Hail, good-lookin! Ro-mance on your mind?

3rd WITCH
Hail, Macdeth, both witness and defendant!
Art happy to see me, or is that a Title IX
enforcement order in thy pocket?

MACDETH
Stay, weird sisters! Download this riddle
into the syntax of propinquity.
For even as the wench of Little Rock
doth hide her charms in cotton-poly blend,
then bends with the remover to remove,
so too methinks your feignèd modesty
encrypts itself the better to reveal.

1st WITCH
Lesser than Robert Reich, and stouter!

2nd WITCH
Wetter than Maxine's waters, and whiter!

3rd WITCH
Like Teddy for a spouse, but better wive'd!

WITCHES
All hail! [*Exeunt*]

MACDETH
Hie thee hence to Lady Hillary,
knock twice—lest haste a Foster husband find—
and quaint her of this morrow's tidings.

LYONS
Good my Lord. [*Exit*]

MACDETH
What joy, what horror must this be, that makes
my very scalp unseat itself, as when
the tempest scatters sickle'd wheat afield
or Cristophe runs his fingers through my hair?
What FDA-untested potion sacks
my intellect, and exiles high-enthronèd
Consciousness of Lack of Consciousness
of Class? Ambition, like a draught
of cannabis long held (but not inhaled),
doth prick resentment to a fury, who
gallops onward riderless, and comes
uncaptained frothing to her post. But let
our morning's revels look to botany;
if she's at Rose, then I'll with Flowers be. [*Exit*]

❦❦❦

Scene II—*The Governor's Mansion.*

[*Enter Lady* HILLARY *with* MESSENGERS]

HILLARY
To Salomon go, and short my 20-years,
but do thou fetch me Deutschmarks in their stead,
that I might 'scape inflation's bloody tooth,
and like an alchemist turn dross to joy.

1st MESS.
I hear, your ladyship, and fly. [*Exit*]

HILLARY
And thou,
ill-gendered knave, get thee to Madison
and teach our gentle cousin we would have
his ear.

2nd MESS.
I go. [*Exit* MESS. *Enter* LYONS]

LYONS
My lady, by your leave . . .

HILLARY
Fair Lyons, I wonder at thy charge, and see
thy face doth fax a message bearing not
the subtext of serenity.

LYONS
So foul
and fair a ball I have not seen. 'Tis foul,
in curving wide of deep left field; 'tis fair,
but in its agents of accomplishment.
For whilst I and thy noble husband did
this morning mark our wonted course afoot,
three pollsteresses squat and whiskered stood
bestride the path and croaked, All hail! All hail,
Mister President! I deem they be
so lipped the flaccid tennis balls of fate
through triumph's garden hose to inspirate. [*Exit*]

HILLARY
Mister President! First Lady, I?
Say rather Empress, partnered with a drone.
By what defect of wit, what folly, what
dire presentiment, did I then yoke me
unto obscurity and shame? O come,
ye Wellesley-spawned Eumenides of spite,
unsex me here! Replace my blood with quarts
of chilliest testosterone, and butch
my hair, that no suspicious visitings
of NOW—nor journalists—might weaken my
resolve, or set me gagging Socks-like on
compunction's hairball.

→

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[*Enter* FOOL]

Fool! Varlet!
cross-gartered, mincing, single-witted knave,
remove thee from mine eyes, for but to gaze
on thy ill-favored visage acheth sore.

FOOL

Madam, 'tis I.

HILLARY

Methought thou wast another,
nearer in bond canonical, though more
remote in kind.

FOOL

Nay, nay, your ladyship,
for ne'er was cuckold made but in his horns
discernible, that shame be published by
his brow, or on his saxophone.

HILLARY

Thou art
an arrant whelp! Take caution lest I pull
the stripes from thine Adidas—but to lay
them on thy back.

FOOL

'Twould make thee whinny.

HILLARY

How?

FOOL

Marry, not as mare but as Mandela,
whose Winnie spurneth not the lash, nor yet
was vexèd by a friend whom time did not
incinerate.

[*sings*] *An ANC leader I knew*
Asked her pals to a strange barbecue
And explaining with sighs,
'Well, smoke gets in your eyes,'
Ignited a dozen or two.

But let me set a riddle, for my head:
How dost thou in thy managements compare
to auguries of Carthage or of Rome?

HILLARY

Thy wit defeats me, naughty Sphinx. Make plain
thy lesson.

FOOL

'Struth, that riches haply came
thy way unearn'd, in chicken futures.

HILLARY

Fie!

FOOL

[*sings*] *A damsel of Lernerite fashion*
Insisted on social compassion:
'The market's degrading.
It's insider trading
That pulls the post-modernist cash in.'

HILLARY

You're fired.

[*Enter* MACDETH]

MACDETH

How *'bout* them *Hawgs!*

HILLARY

You're hired again.
And what blind beggary of fortune leads
thee here? No lickerous enticement to
thy fancy struts within these walls. No drab
awaits, no bawd, no trollop, slattern, slut
or concubine, no bacon double-cheese
with extra fries. Or haply hast thou lost
thy MasterCard, and cruel need restored thee
to our halls?

FOOL

[*sings*] *When she finds on her bed an intruder*
Like to Mandy Rice-Davies, but nuder,
Slick Willie explains
And forthrightly maintains
First I gave her a job, then I
hey nonny hey nonny
hey nonny nonny
hey now Elizabeth Tudor!

MACDETH

Nay, tire me not in the habiliments
of wrath, nor taunt me with remorse's sting.
For now is the winter of our discontent
made Acapulco through the *New York Times,*
and any misdemeanors of the past
full deeply in the Metro section buried.
Indeed this very day intelligence
is mine, if I can but New Hampshire or
Nebraska buy, that Little Rock shall lose
both pimp and pimpernel, and Washington
a fan of Fleetwood find.

HILLARY

Let no device
remain untried, no artifice untested,
that ruth should beggar opportunity,
or honor's scruples pauperize success.

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The siding from thy mother's mobile home
I'll sell, her dentures pawn, her Elvis lamp,
her Betty Crocker coupons liquidate!
Come Phaedra, come mistress mine Medea,
teach your willing daughter true resolve!
My husband I'll dismember for his pelf,
nor e'en his long-retirèd Jockey shorts
can rest unmortgaged, but shall serve
our purposes: as britches of contract,
brief harbingers of longings sated.

FOOL [*aside*]
That creditor be credulous indeed
who takes in trust such fell collateral.

MACDETH
If we should fail?

HILLARY
You fail! But do thou act
upon thy courage as it is thy wont
to operate upon thy hostesses,
and thou'lt not fail. Did not the bearded crones
give certain prescience of triumph?
Then play the man—or better, play the field,
and I shall summon manliness for both. [*Exeunt*]

FOOL
'Tis passing strange, that Caesar, in his home
should tempt the "why" of fate,
and stint the Y of chromosome. [*Exit*]

ACT II

Scene I—*A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.*

1st WITCH
Where hast thou been, sister?

2nd WITCH
Killing swine.

3rd WITCH
Porkers, boars, or gender-chauvinists?

2nd WITCH
Marry, all three, and at a single stroke.

1st WITCH
How now?

2nd WITCH
Vin Foster lieth silenced on the crimson'd turf,
and husband, lawyer, Razorback alike
are dumb, reposing in the selfsame corse.

1st WITCH
'Tis well and bravely done!
Then turn we to our order's liturgy,
lest Dee Dee's woe be changed to Limbaugh's glee.

WITCHES
Double, treble toil and trouble,
fan the flamers, prick the bubble,
in the cauldron boil and bake
Packwood's acne, Bobbitt's ache.
Lorena's shiv and Tonya's shank,
constituents of Barney Frank,
eye of World Trade Center bomber,
midnight snack of Jeffrey Dahmer . . .

[*Enter* AUDITOR]

AUDITOR
Oyez! Oyez!
[*Reads*] "Here be it noted in conformity
with H.R. 741 6(e)3:
Provideth funding for this curse, in parts,
The National Endowment for the Arts." [*Exit*]

WITCHES
. . . distill our brew with earwig venom,
compound with Amy Fisher's denim,
Teddy's poppers, Willie's toke,
Jonestown punch, Anita's Coke,
Janet Reno's rescue tactics,
Magic Johnson's prophylactics,
G-man's sting and he-man's stench,
powder'd harlot, Liquid Wench, →

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jaws of Jersey City mobster,
claws of Chappaquiddick lobster
(clutching in its briny clickers
Mary Jo Kopechne's knickers),
possum's blister, maggot's wen,
Susan Estrich estrogen—
Macdeth shall thus the networks charm
to spin the news and spare him harm! [*Exeunt*]

Scene II—*The White House.*

[*Enter* MACDETH, HILLARY, MESSENGERS *and* FOOL]

MACDETH
Ah! for those departed too-brief hours of peace,
unwoo'd, infugitive, when sorrows died
more swiftly than they rose, and cank'rous cares
of state were bounded by the couch. O Arkansas!
Thy very hookworms prick my memory
as messengers of fragile joy, and lisp
in words more bitter for their sweetness
of pleasures I shall never taste again.
My desk, my Georgetown tie, my chiefs of staff—
all the massy dignities of state,
would I the most precipitously trade,
to purchase but an acre of my own
demesne, that uninhabitable past!

HILLARY
Art mindful of the time? We part anon
for Michigan to press down Polack gorge
the schemes of our firstladydom, lest he
or she wed his or her disquietude
to wit, and vomit our pretended physick.

MACDETH
The clock's a slave severer than his lord
and whoreson miserly, that spareth not
an hour for dalliance. [*Aside*] A slice of bread,
a six of Meister Brau, and thou, my coy
Miss Little Rock, electioneering in
the back of my Chevelle—'twas paradise!

FOOL
And how. Lend me a Whopper, nuncle, and I'll teach
thee why thy office girls are known as possums.

MACDETH
So let me learn.

FOOL
Primo, for their wit and provenance.
Secundo, for that they counterfeit the dead.
Terzo, because they hold on to their jobs with their tail.

[*Enter* MYERS]

Yet trippeth nigh calamity, I'll warrant.

MYERS
Mistress, master! Sir Vincent Foster comes
no more at your behest.

MACDETH
Subpoena'd?

MYERS
Slain.
For jury, judge and executioner
unto himself he played, and furthe—

MACDETH & HILLARY
I guess
we'll never, never, never, never know
what happen'd . . .

MACDETH
. . . nor what melancholick flux
or humor darkened his estate . . .

HILLARY
. . . nor how
his private woes were hid from public gaze
or friendship's many-eyed solicitude.
Do thou apprise our constables and scribes
that silence be their most becoming dirge,
nor naughty Democrat did e'er Pulitzer breed.

[*Exit* MYERS]

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FOOL [*aside*]
Full eager sextonry that love enroll'd
which fills love's grave afore his corse be cold.

HILLARY [*to* MESSENGERS]
Fly! Fly! To those new-orphaned chambers go,
and savage there the relics of his charge!
What cannot be dismembered, kindle; rip
what won't be fed into the flame!
Be no leaf left familiar to his brother,
no scribèd pair of words conjoin'd.
Spare not the infant children of his pen,
lest all too soon they learn the art of speech
and prattle mortal secrets to the world.
His hard disk trash, his floppies formattize:
cut out the tongue of memory, and thus
turn Testimony mute; for so methinks
shall Justice keep her dreadsome sword
well-scabbarded, when to her sightless gaze
is deafness full compounded!
[*Exeunt* MESSENGERS]

FOOL
Lady, knowest wherefore eagle gaol'd the bush-hog
for a clumsy spy?

HILLARY
Nay, fool. Do tell.

FOOL
That bush-hog torched his house in seeming secret,
then chid him not to look upon the smoke.

[*sings*] *Was ever brain so weightless yet*
Lead bullets made it lighter?
Was ever Whitewater so clean
That whitewash turn'd it whiter?

MACDETH
This dicing with doom's hit-man likes me not.

HILLARY
Wouldst rather he yet lived? Nay, starch thy spine,
nor license fear to sully thy repute,
thy manhood, or thy BVDs (which, bear
in mind, shall not be fully amortized
'til '96). Do chasten thy trepidity.
for sawdust doth a queasy press-corps feed,
and those who yet will not be stonewalled we
shall Stephanopoulize. [*Exeunt*]

ACT III

Scene I—*A hall in the White House. A banquet prepared.*

[*Enter* MACDETH, HILLARY, *and guests*]

MACDETH
Welcome, all. The majesty of state
doth well to feast her aristocracy
as roundly as she famisheth all else;
and you, dear guests, in breeding eminent—
I speak of triumphs in *salons de goût,*
not of the nursery—rejoice yourselves
in such delected trophies of success
as interest and merit shall incline.
For all . . .

[*Enter* GHOST *of* KOPECHNE, *garlanded with seaweed*]

KOPECHNE
[*Sings*] *Larded with sweet flowers*
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers . . .

[*Enter* GHOST *of* FOSTER]

FOSTER
[*Sings*] *Some enchanted evening*
You will meet a stranger . . .

[*to* KOPECHNE]

Hang it all, sweetheart, this is a private banquet.

KOPECHNE
Come I this eve when fêted be the SJC,
my inquest to appeal, to wail mine injury.

FOSTER
Senate Judiciary Committee? Aye, *next* Friday. This here is the American Bar Association.

KOPECHNE
Ah! Your pardon, sir. I guess I'll be avaunting.
I pray you kindly disregard this haunting. [*Exit*]

HILLARY
Come, come, thou starest as a maddened bull,
or saddened steer, belike—continue, worm!

MACDETH
Canst disregard that gore, that loathsome gaze?
Alack the day, the hour, that seeth slain
my tongue, my appetite!

HILLARY
Right cheerfully
discount we thy vice president, what though
he aideth our digestion not. Go to.

→

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MACDETH
Welcome, all. The majesty of state
doth well to feast her true nobility,
our nation's flower; thus it is we come
together to felicitate with one
accord our

[GHOST *sits in* HILLARY*'s lap*]

necrophiles . . . and doughnuts.

HILLARY
Still dumb?

MACDETH
Welcome, all. Full many peetsers have I laded
upon this board, nor scanted onions, peppers,
exter sauce—

HILLARY
We hear.

MACDETH
—termaters, cheese,
eye-talian sausages with them little seeds
inside 'em, weenies, olives (green and black),
pimentoes, cheese again, zucchini, mushrooms,
Velveeta, Spam, salami,

HILLARY
Dearest sir,
remember where we are.

MACDETH
Yea, *dolphin-safe*
salami! Onions, eyes of newts and toes
of frogs and wools of bats and Fightin' Hawgs,
Dancer and Prancer and Donner and Blitzen,
half a league, half a league, octave of Whitsun,
into the Valley of Dolls they rode,
valiant six hundred!

HILLARY
Friends, we beg your gracious leave. Our lord
craveth . . . Health Care. [*Exeunt*]

FOSTER
If madam's will alone could purchase health,
we'd see Kevorkian augment his wealth. [*Exit*]

Scene II—*The White House, outside Lady* HILLARY*'s chamber.*

[*Enter* MYERS *and* ELDERS]

MYERS
Twice seven nights have I kept vigil here,
to watch my Lady break her rest in twain,
and rise, tho' not awaked, and wander down
this very corridor, supplied with five
or six erasers, then commence to rub
upon the patterned paper of the walls
with grievous haste and industry—as though
to bleach the White House with her blanks away.
She'll gain her couch again within the hour,
withal by sense or memory unpiloted.

ELDERS
Soft now, she walks.

[*Enter* HILLARY, *nightgowned, with a handbag, looking about her and pointing*]

HILLARY
But here's a decimal.

MYERS
And speaks.

HILLARY
Yet another. And again.

[*Takes a bottle of white-out from the bag and begins to paint her nails*]

More dots, more dots. We've lots and lots of dots.
Thank heaven for Ko-Rek-Type, for we'd else
be dotty. Downright potty. [*Opens window*]
We see stars. Stars and Bars. Stars *through* bars,
but for our privilege. Or are they dots?
Or both? Star, dot, star. Delete: star-dot-star:
We would thou couldst! And by a finger's touch
wipe clean the cipher'd night-skies of our past.

[*Sings*] O *does eat dots*
And mares eat dots
And microdots eat ivy
Acquittal HIV-2, wouldn't you?

ELDERS
Now dat is one messed-up

HILLARY
Ho! A light . . .
Nay, 'tis but a dot. Out, damn'd dot! [*Exit*]

MYERS
Canst thou with thy leech's art uproot
this fever'd fancy from her mind? Is there
no surgery, no knife, this ill to amputate?

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ELDERS
She needs *Lloyd* Cutlery, not scalpels, child:
I diagnose a sore 1040, jointly filed.
And, honey, that be Joycelyn's *ipsa dixit,*
'Cause if it ain't broke latex, I don't fix it. [*Exeunt*]

ACT IV

[*The exercise yard of Ft. Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary. Enter* MACDETH *and* LYONS, *jogging*]

MACDETH
How now, my gentle Lyons, what's o'clock?

LYONS
My liege, bright Phoebus knocks on Aries' door,
and begs admittance, pleading but an hour's
tarry in his house. [*Looking at the wall-clock by the gate*] Quarter to two.

MACDETH
Wondrous slow be time's unfroward tread,
and whoreson recusant himself,
who lags and limps behind anticipation,
and goads her on while tugging at the reins!
I wonder what's for supper. Wednesday night
perchance we've chili dogs; full gladly could
I half a score internalize, but for
that Fuzzy in the ketchup bowl doth oft
his cut-leaf plug expectorate.

[*Enter* WITCHES *garbed as wardens*]

WITCHES
Parcel for 6327.

MACDETH
We thank you for your pains. Belike compassion's
tardy token, a sop to injur'd honor, balm in Kansas'
Gilead—or Tootsie Rolls.

WITCHES
A gauge of love these presents be,
from Mrs. Edward Kennedy,
who (being to thy needs alert)
conveys this gift for your dessert.

Curdle milk and choler quicken,
Cripple limbs and deafness thicken,
Darken sight and temper sicken!

[*Exeunt* WITCHES]

MACDETH
Then take we merit's pulse . . . *McChicken!*

[*Re-enter* WITCHES *leading prisoner* FOOL, *in the guise of Ronald McDonald*]

Lo!
Doth fancy bend our vision to its will?
or is this fortune's jack indeed?

FOOL
The same.
My duty done, and doing five to eight.

MACDETH
How now?

FOOL
My mistress turn'd State's Evidence
against thyself—a pardoner's tale!—and so
indulgence purchased with the coin of thy
confinement.

MACDETH
What, 'twas so?

FOOL
And thereupon
she lofted Teddy to her highest Court,
who scarce was robed and wigged but wed again,
that Little Rock ne'er lack attorney's fees,
nor scandal's harpies vex Hyannis Port;
for by his zipper is he often tripped,
whose waitresses are tumbled more than tipped!

[*sings*] *Lest he come under feminist fire*
For indulging seigneural desire
Disarmed he all blame
by changing his name
to Ted Kennedy-Rodham, Esq.

MACDETH
Down, down I come, unwiv'd, un-amnestied,
to pay Whitewater's interest, and its deed;
'tis nobler that I quit this life in season
than breathe the air befoulèd by such treason!
Depart I now for heaven's caring shores . . .

[*Takes drumstick out of box*]

Mmf . . . those exter tater tots are yours.

[*Stabs drumstick down his throat*]

FOOL
Now croaks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet prince,
that uttered blessing with thy last McBreath;
McFlights of angels do thy tonsils rinse
with Diet Pepsi, as befits McDeath! [*Exeunt omnes*]

~ Finis ~

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Christopher Byron

Who'll Start the Rain?

Why would a Republican public relations powerhouse hire a prodigal child of Camelot as its Washington rainmaker?

As everyone knows, you can't get through a revolving door if you're carrying too much luggage—a lesson that is currently being learned anew by the folks at the Burson-Marsteller & Co. public relations firm. Last year the Republican-rooted firm picked up a Democratic "living legend" who was expected to lure clients to the company, especially its struggling Washington, D.C. office. The would-be rainmaker? Mr. Pierre Salinger, global super-journalist extraordinaire (so to speak).

Back in the 1980s, Burson-Marsteller was the quintessence of the plugged-in Republican P.R. powerhouse. The chief operating officer, Tom Bell, was wired in to every Republican in town who mattered. He had been chief of staff to Senate Republican Bill Brock of Tennessee, and was once married to Dan Quayle's first cousin. Bolstered by the deep pockets of the Young & Rubicam advertising agency, which acquired Burson-Marsteller in 1984, Bell went on an acquisition drive that gobbled up some of the most influential Republican lobbying boutiques in town, including Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly and Gold & Liebengood.

But not even the revelations of Gennifer Flowers could keep the gravy train on track forever, and scarcely had Bill Clinton won the 1992 election than the phone calls of Burson-Marsteller's army of flacks stopped getting returned. The problem was acute, because, as the firm's confidential records reveal, Burson-Marsteller's worldwide financial prospects were already darkening, a casualty of the weak economy and the cost-cutting pressures bearing down on the entire flack industry.

Burson officials say their firm is healthy and growing—and it certainly looks good when compared with some other big, multi-line PR operations. But a report from the company's bean counters last August, which came out just about when Salinger was beginning work as the company's new "vice chairman," says Burson's glory days are over. It reads, "We continue to perform below expectations, even as measured against the July forecast. We know everyone is highly conscious of the situation and is doing their [sic] best to build income and control costs." After nearly doubling its fee income in the last two years of the Bush presidency, the Washington office saw its fee income actually drop in 1993, to $30.5 million—an abrupt reversal of fortunes.

Other big PR operations had faced squeezes, too, with bloated staffs, high-living top brass, and (ever since the 1987 stock market crash) penurious corporate clients. The

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most visible bloodletting took place at Hill & Knowlton, whose billings plunged after a series of well-publicized scandals. But Burson-Marsteller's problem was, if not the most severe, then certainly the least expected. After all, here was a firm that had put together a Washington money-machine in the Reagan and Bush administrations. Now the business in that office was coming under pressure, threatening a financial crunch on the entire worldwide enterprise—which at its peak at the start of the nineties had numbered more than 2,000 employees in sixty-two offices in twenty-eight countries.

What Burson needed was someone able to bring in new business worldwide, as well as get those Washington call-backs coming in from the Democrats. But who should be offered the job? More to the point, who could be persuaded to take it? One recently departed Burson official says a pitch was made to New York super-flack John Scanlon, who turned it down flat. (Scanlon confirms that he did indeed turn down an offer to join the firm, but says the position involved a job in *New York*, not Washington.)

Be that as it may, one person *was* clearly interested in the job, and that was Pierre Salinger, who needed to find a way to keep trading on the one credential that had kept his entire 30-year career in public life seemingly on the rise: his job as John Kennedy's press secretary from Inauguration Day 1961 to Dallas a thousand days later. In the job of global rainmaker for Burson's Washington office, Salinger thought he saw a way to do just that.

Swathed in the aromas of Camelot, Salinger after the assassination had been appointed a U.S. senator from California to fill out the term of Clair Engle. After that came a brief stint as a flack for a B-list airline, then a prestigious columnist's slot at the Paris weekly *L'Express*. Finally in 1977, Salinger caught the eye of Roone Arledge, then undergoing his own meteoric rise from head of ABC Sports to head of the network's news division. Bedazzled by Salinger's celebrity, Arledge offered him a post in Paris as a roving bigfoot for the network news division.

Salinger moved into a spectacular apartment on the rue de Rivoli, and took up the life of a bon vivant and world-class name-dropper. Often he could be found ensconced at the most visible table in Brasserie Lipp, Paris's premier literary and political eatery, a fitting venue for a foreigner who had been made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Marc Gunther's recent book on ABC News[1] quotes a colleague as remarking, "Roone has made it possible for Pierre to live the life to which he always wanted to become accustomed." Buoyed by his credentials on the Parisian social circuit, Salinger was appointed Paris bureau chief in 1978, then in 1983 was elevated to the still grander slot of chief European correspondent. "Pierre was by far the best known American in Paris," says a correspondent for a rival network at the time. "He was better known than any ambassador or corporate CEO. *Every* Frenchman knew his name."

It is no small accomplishment to be able to promote oneself into the role of living legend, and that alone made Salinger valuable to ABC News—at least for a while. In his spare time, Salinger also managed to author eight books on various subjects, and that, too, is no mean feat. A recent adulatory profile quotes one ABC official as observing that Pierre could simply pick up the phone and get any number of heads of government on the line—an invaluable resource for any global news organization.

It is no small accomplishment to be able to promote oneself into the role of living legend, and that alone made Salinger valuable to ABC News—at least for a while.

Yet whatever his accomplishments as ABC's official Door Opener to the Palace, Salinger was less impressive as an actual journalist. The trouble was, *he* never quite seemed to realize it. Instead, he kept confusing his stature as one of the last figures of Camelot with his role as a working journalist, creating a sense of overblown self-importance that enveloped him like a cloud. Marc Gunther cites a hilarious example—when Salinger began a news segment by declaring, "This is Pierre Salinger in Rome," as the screen showed a close-up of the Pope disembarking from an airplane.

A colleague in Europe still recalls Salinger's coverage of a TWA hijacking in the mid-1980s, especially his grand entrance upon arriving in Algiers via chartered plane from Nice. As he strode across the tarmac, there was the pilot tagging behind, carrying his bags. Salinger stayed on the scene half a day, then strode back across the tarmac and departed heavenward. In fact, it may well have been only by chartered jet that Salinger could have gotten to the hijacking at all. But jealous rivals saw only the spectacle of the pompous super-journalist making yet another fashionably late arrival—and early departure.

Salinger did have a coup or two. Gunther notes, for example, that reporting by Salinger helped ABC scoop the world on the Iranian hostage release story. Nonetheless, in 1987 Salinger got the first really bad break of his broadcast career, as ABC, under intensifying cost-cutting pressures after its takeover by Capital Cities, gutted its Paris operation, and transferred Salinger to London. Interviewed for this story, Salinger said that the main reason was that ABC News was picking up a portion of his taxes and that the tax burden was expected to be lower on him in Britain.

[1] *The House That Roone Built: The Inside Story of ABC News*, by Marc Gunther. Little, Brown, 381 pages, $23.95.

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Whatever the case, Salinger plainly did not want to move. "It was my employer's decision, not mine," he said. In Paris, Salinger had long since established himself as the government's first choice whenever a top official wanted to be interviewed on subjects of interest to Americans. But in London—home to the largest and most talented pool of American journalists abroad—Salinger was just one correspondent among many.

Nor were the British as bowled over as the French by Pierre Salinger. Unable to open doors with the mere mention of his name, he had to compete in the workaday world of breaking news, and this made his self-puffing efforts seem even more out of place and distasteful.

Off-the-record interviews with past and present ABC news people rarely brought flattering comments. One told of Salinger's empire-building efforts to construct a "bureau within the bureau" in London, and of underlings getting whipsawed in turf struggles between Salinger and the London bureau chief, David Glott.

Salinger said that he and Glott, to whom he referred as "my deputy," got along famously. But a London bureau source recalls otherwise, recounting an incident in which a recently hired Salinger aide was chewed out by Salinger for even listening to an attempt by Glott to countermand a Salinger order that would have sent the person to the Middle East on a story. "Pierre does not make the decisions around here," roared Glott. "I am the one in charge." When Salinger learned of Glott's explosion, he called the subordinate to his office and shouted that Glott could stuff it and to get on a plane pronto. Salinger prevailed and the subordinate headed for Heathrow.

On another occasion, Salinger found himself having trouble getting responses to his memos to New York. To remind the brass who they were dealing with, he sent yet another rocket to New York, this time attaching a photo of himself to it and splashing "HOT NEWS" across the top.

The next day, the news desk in New York held its routine conference call with all the field bureaus, and the "World News Tonight" producer who hosted the meeting began with this announcement: "Yesterday someone sent a memo to World News with the words 'Hot News' written across the top. To that individual and to all of you I want to say that there is no such thing as 'hot news' at ABC. There is news or there is no news. I do not want to see a memo like that ever again." Everyone in London knew the culprit was Salinger, who reddened in the face and got up and stormed back to his office. (His office, of course, happened to be the plushest in the bureau, featuring an oversized oak desk, a couch and sitting area, and walls adorned with awards and photographs of himself with the world's high-and-mighty.) The subject never came up again, and there were no more memos with "Hot News" across the top.

Salinger seemed to enjoy torturing one bureau executive, Ned Warwick, a Capital Cities man sent to London as a budget-cutter. Salinger would summon him to his office and—after pointedly not inviting him to sit—berate Warwick about one thing or another. If an assistant happened to be in the room and asked whether to step outside, Salinger would dig the knife in even deeper by saying, "Oh no, this isn't important," then continue with his diatribe.

Salinger's wife, Nicole, was a piece of work, and would make periodic grand appearances in the London bureau with the family dog on a leash. Handing the pooch to Salinger she would announce that it was *his* time to start handling some of the domestic chores at the Salinger house—which would cause twitters of approval all over the news room.

Salinger's promotional efforts, launched from the platform of ABC's morning show, helped raise millions for the project, and ultimately led to the foundation's becoming a Burson client.

Salinger's record as an actual investigative journalist was mixed. "His sources were obscure and often paid money for their information," says one of his London aides at the time. "But the information they provided was often unverifiable, and sometimes demonstrably false." That was particularly so with his reporting on the December 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103.

Shortly after the bombing, Salinger concluded—based largely, it would appear, on input from a pro-Libyan contact living in Paris—that Syrians were behind the attack. Thinking he'd uncovered the biggest scoop of the age, Salinger tried to interest the CIA in what he thought he knew, and began feeding confidential ABC research files to a female contact in the personnel records branch of the CIA. She in turn had been angling to get herself reassigned to a CIA group doing work on terrorism—and started passing the files around the Agency to promote herself as someone with access, via Salinger, to the internal files of ABC News.

According to a letter from the CIA contact, the flow of information and documents from Salinger continued for six months. The woman's June 1989 letter strokes Salinger's ego, telling him that her superiors are anxious to see whatever else he could come up with. In my interview with him, Salinger did acknowledge supplying the materials to the CIA, but said he did so only to help shed light on the Pan Am 103 bombing itself. Pan Am was trying to implicate the CIA in the bombing and Salinger would soon assert that the DEA might be implicated. It seems likely that Salinger was simply hoping to open up a back-channel for swapping ABC News information for tidbits from the CIA—something the letter from his CIA contact clearly suggests was on his mind.

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In any event, Salinger's information was basically worthless, and when it reached the CIA anti-terrorism group working on the bombing, it was dismissed, in the words of one group official, as "junk." But that didn't stop Salinger from getting ABC to put it on the air—even to the point of actually naming the alleged bombers. Thus, in November 1989, Salinger starred in an ABC "PrimeTime Live" special, fingering three specific individuals known as the "Kenyan Three": Mohammed al-Makoussi, Ibrahim Twafik-Youssef, and Hassan Hadi al-Ahar. According to Salinger, they were working for Syrian-backed terrorist Ahmed Jibril, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command. Further, reported Salinger, the information came to him from "sources inside the terrorist movement."

In fact, much of the information came either from Salinger's pro-Libyan chum in Paris, or from other journalists who, in some cases, were simply passing along information they heard from each other. The information was disbelieved by the CIA officials who reviewed it prior to airing. But the show went ahead anyway, and Salinger won several awards for it.

Thereafter, in the spring of 1990, a freelance investigator with ties to ABC learned that the CIA was in fact investigating the possibility of *Libyan* involvement in the bombing, and had passed on to Salinger the name of a key suspect, who happened to be living in London at the time. The tip proved to be prescient, for it wasn't long after that the U.S. and Britain jointly accused the Libyan government of having orchestrated the bombing. In any event, Salinger badly mishandled the lead. Not knowing what to make of the information, he told an aide to go to the suspect's apartment and "interview" him. The aide did exactly that, in the process alerting the man to the fact that he was a suspect in the bombing.

With the finger of suspicion now beginning to point toward not Syria but Libya, "PrimeTime Live" in December 1990 ran a rehashed version of the

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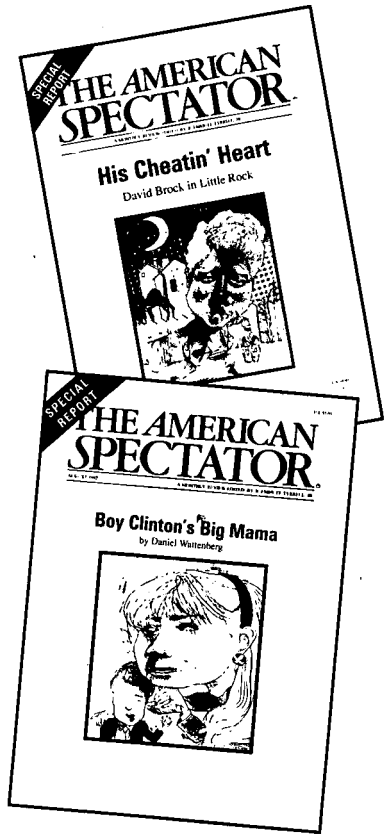

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November 1989 story. The show again starred Salinger. But by now, having apparently realized that it had named the wrong bombers in the earlier account, ABC simply eliminated all mention of them in its new and improved version of events—without, of course, acknowledging that the earlier story had been wrong in any way.

Salinger also played a clumsy role in the so-called April Glaspie affair, which featured reports of Glaspie, then the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, witlessly giving Saddam Hussein what he interpreted as a green light to invade Kuwait. Salinger, long viewed as a soft touch for the Arab cause, was slipped a transcript of the Glaspie-Saddam meeting in late August 1990. ABC News wanted to use the transcript as the peg for an invasion special a few days later, but a source in London says Salinger was frantic to get it on the air immediately, and when the brass in New York would not oblige, he told an aide on September 4 to leak the transcript to the British newspaper the *Guardian*. The aide refused, but a week later the *Guardian* was out with the story anyway, suggesting that Salinger himself had done the deed.

Salinger says the assertion is false. Although he does admit to having supplied the Glaspie transcript to the *Guardian*, he says he didn't do so until after ABC had used it for a special entitled "A Line in the Sand," which aired on Tuesday night, September 11, 1990. Moreover, said Salinger, he checked personally with "World News Tonight" before doing so.

But does Salinger's claim make sense? On Wednesday morning, September 12, 1990, the *Guardian* published an entire story on the Glaspie-Saddam meeting, complete with lengthy verbatim quotes from the actual transcript translation that Salinger's ABC underlings had prepared. The story appeared in all four editions of the newspaper, the first one of which was put to bed at 8:45 p.m. London time. Allowing for the five-hour time difference between New York and the U.K., the first edition of the *Guardian* was actually published ahead of the ABC broadcast, supporting the claim of the London source that the *Guardian* received the Glaspie transcript *before* ABC News went on the air, not after. The writer of the *Guardian* story, Hella Pick, confirmed to me that Salinger gave her the transcript and that he did so not after the ABC news story was broadcast but earlier in the day of September 11.

In one instance that has since become a matter of embarrassment to Salinger and Burson alike, Salinger managed to entangle his own affairs with those of the network, then drag the entanglements with him to Burson-Marsteller. The situation began to develop in January 1993, when Salinger parlayed his credentials as a World War II vet—along with his top-drawer political and social contacts in France—into the chairmanship of a nonprofit project to raise money for a memorial to commemorate the Allied invasion of Normandy. Yet while continuing to work as a paid consultant to ABC News, he promoted the Normandy memorial undertaking—for which he worked as an unpaid "volunteer"—to the network's "Good Morning America" show, and wound up being put on the air to talk up the project.

Salinger's promotional efforts, launched from the platform of ABC's morning show, helped raise millions for the project, and ultimately led to the foundation's becoming a Burson client. Unfortunately, the project's finances thereafter careened out of control, with much of the money that Salinger helped raise being allegedly diverted to other purposes. Salinger himself has been accused of no wrongdoing. Nonetheless, since $3 million in project seed-money came from federal funds through the sale of commemorative coins, the General Accounting Office is now investigating, as is the Internal Revenue Service.

"The company thought it was buying a magic bullet—and a fat Rolodex—to solve Burson-Marsteller's problems," says a top executive who recently left the firm. "In fact, it brought in a guy who'd been out of the loop for thirty years, with no one to speak of in his Rolodex at all."

By the time Salinger became involved with the Normandy project, it was clear his days at ABC were numbered. Perhaps sensing as much, Salinger tried to play his Camelot card one last time, and, following Bill Clinton's 1992 victory, began promoting himself to New York to be reassigned to Washington as the network's bureau chief; after all, now that a 1990s version of John Kennedy was set to move into the White House, what better man for the job? But ABC would have none of it, and told him his contract would not be renewed.

It was at this point that the offer materialized at Burson-Marsteller. "The company thought it was buying a magic bullet—and a fat Rolodex—to solve Burson-Marsteller's problems," says a top executive who recently left the firm. "In fact, it brought in a guy who'd been out of the loop for thirty years, with no one to speak of in his Rolodex at all." The truth was, hiring Salinger showed just how out of the loop Burson-Marsteller itself was.

Salinger arrived in grand style. Given the title of vice chairman, Salinger was said to have been lured aboard by a $500,000-plus salary and plenty of perks—one of which was visible to anyone who worked on the company's tenth floor, where workmen began knocking down walls to turn two abutting offices into a suite grand enough to suit the tastes of a Hollywood mogul.

Salinger's hiring was celebrated at a Burson-sponsored gala thrown at Washington's Willard Hotel. Everyone who counted in Democratic circles was invited. Unfortunately, most of the people who turned up were Burson-Marsteller's

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own clients. From the people who really counted there were plenty of sincere-sounding regrets, but the highest-ranking warm body from the administration who actually showed up was a staff flack from the Treasury Department.

Ted Kennedy did make a walk-on appearance, but never got farther than the door into the ballroom. A Burson-Marsteller official, standing just inside the doorway, recalls seeing Kennedy say hello to Salinger, then scan the room warily for friendly faces. Seeing none, he clapped Salinger on the back and said, "Great to have you back . . . gotta run" (or some such), and beat a quick retreat.

Back at the office, the circumstances that accompanied Salinger's arrival could not have been worse. Scarcely had the news gone out when the brass at Burson's parent company, Young & Rubicam, announced a desperate, new get-tough policy to cut costs: Whenever the firm loses an account, everyone who worked on it gets fired.

Within a month the exodus had begun. In September, the company announced a buy-out offer to encourage anyone who wanted to leave to do so, and the mob scene at the down-elevator resembled panic. Worse, in many cases, the people deciding to cash in their chips were among the best and most talented in the company. There was, for example, Wayne Pines, one-time deputy commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. Pines had been the big star in Burson-Marsteller's pharmaceuticals group; when he left, so did much of Burson's ability to wheel and deal inside the agency. Nearly a dozen other heavyweights slip-streamed out the door behind him, taking many of the firm's biggest and most lucrative accounts.

In the words of one official, it wasn't long before life at the firm had begun to suggest the corporate equivalent of nuclear winter. The biggest remaining account in the office was the Government of Mexico, but when NAFTA passed, there was nothing left to do for the Mexicans and *that* business all but dried up, too. According to an insider at the firm, the Mexico account had been generating roughly $4 million a year in fees, but is now bringing in less than a quarter of that amount.

As for new business, the firm has recently signed up the American Legion for a "multi-year" deal that will be worth "seven digits," says the insider. But another new piece of business seems pretty desperate by any measure: a $1.2 million account funded by Philip Morris and known as the "National Smokers' Alliance." Its bizarre mission: to promote the positive side of tobacco—an account that Burson has struggled mightily to keep secret. Salinger, an obsessive cigar smoker, is listed in corporate filings as a member of the Smokers' Alliance board, yet he is identified not as a Burson-Marsteller official but as a "former U.S. Senator."

Meanwhile, even the big cheese himself—Tom Bell—has departed for the greener pastures of a corner office at Gulfstream Aerospace, and Salinger keeps doing his best to drum up new business. "He's invaluable to us," says Charles Black of Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly, enthusing over Salinger's ability to dazzle clients and impress the high and mighty. Unfortunately, Salinger's charm doesn't seem to be going far in Washington. Says Black, "He spends 90 percent of his time abroad," citing places like Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East.

Yet for all Salinger's efforts, that much expected cloudburst still hasn't developed, and there looks to be little rain in the forecast anytime soon. In a move reminiscent of his days as an Arab-leaning journalist, Salinger tried unsuccessfully to land an account representing the Palestine Liberation Organization—an effort that Burson officials clearly wish would be forgotten and insist is now dead. "It didn't actually involve the PLO at all," a Burson official explains lamely, "just some Arab-Americans who wanted to support the PLO in the peace process."

Salinger's Normandy Foundation business also seems to be something the Burson folks would just as soon forget. When questioned on the matter, Burson's chief operating officer in its Washington office said he was unaware of any such client. But a receptionist at the foundation says Burson does indeed do work for it, a fact Salinger confirms. (After looking more deeply into the matter, the Burson honcho reported back that he stood corrected, but allowed that the account was being run out of New York and has nothing to do with Washington.)

In the event, don't count Salinger out yet. So long as some CEO somewhere still clings to the faint and fading memory of King John of Kennedy and his Court, there will doubtless be new opportunities still to be tapped by Camelot's crown prince of self-promotion. ❐

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Yale Kramer

Day at the Beach

How disaster was turned into victory at Omaha Beach—and why nothing comparable could happen today.

Omaha Beach

The weather, the weather—leaden, low-lying nimbus clouds, with sharp, cold winds whipping in from the channel, and periods of slashing rain—dominates the preparations for the main events of D-Day as it dominated the main event fifty years ago. It's as if the gods of war want to remind and reproach the light-hearted here—the French, mostly, and the young—of what it was like then, when three thousand Americans fell on this beach.

The battle that raged on this narrow strip of sand and pebbles—barely ten yards wide at high tide—was one of the most terrible of the American war. It ranks with Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, and Tarawa in ferocity and bloodiness. Although briefer than those great struggles—it lasted only eight or nine hours—it too was one of those in which two armies of men clash, each knowing from the outset that there can be no retreat, that only their wills can determine the outcome.

For the men who fought that day, the Battle of Omaha Beach became a spiritual struggle and perhaps that is why we accord it a special place in our memory. Spiritual, not in the large sense in which Eisenhower thought of Operation Overlord as a crusade to annihilate the evil of Nazism, but in a more personal sense. The spirit that came from every man that day, alive, wounded, dying, or dead—from every dog-face, every noncom, every ninety-day wonder, every field officer; from their fear, their desperation, their grit—was what eventually won this four-mile strip of beach.

You can sense this when you talk to the old men who were here then. They seem to be the only source of authenticity and perspective in the sea of media and officialdom that has overtaken the commemorations. As they wander through the quiet symmetrical beauty of the American Cemetery on this cold and rainy day, passing the many crosses that say "*Here rests in honored glory a comrade in arms known but to God*," searching for a lost friend, or perhaps something of themselves from fifty years ago. Each one of their stories is a mixture of loss, fear, pride, and, often, humor. And most of them know that, although they will never be back to this place, they have never been away from it.

In a sense, the relatively brief battle of Omaha Beach, significantly more critical than the fighting that went on at the other four assault beaches, foreshadowed the titanic struggle for the rest of Normandy. Except for Stalingrad, the Battle of Normandy—Overlord—was the

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most decisive of the war in Europe. After Normandy there was no chance whatever for the Germans to win or stalemate the war. In fact, although it was not recognized at the time, the defeat of the Germans in Normandy, six weeks after D-Day, broke the back of the Wehrmacht. They had lost 400,000 men and most of their dreaded Panzer Divisions. It was the last great struggle of the Germans in the West. By September 4, the Allies were at the Belgian-German border.

Looking up from the waterline on the windswept beach it is easy to see that this was not a good place for an amphibious assault. At both ends of the beach there is high ground with commanding views of the entire curving anchorage. The entire beach was subject to sweeping artillery fire from these points. To make matters worse, there was no cover or place of concealment for several hundred yards from the low-water line where the men landed to the sea wall at the top of the beach. The sea wall, twelve feet high in places, provided some cover to those in its immediate shadow, but it and the dense barbed wire all over it provided a formidable obstacle to the men and especially the tanks and vehicles that made it ashore. Those attackers who breached the sea wall found themselves on a shelf of grassy sand and marsh that sloped up sharply to a plateau 150 feet above the beach. This slope, now overgrown with a tangle of wild vegetation, was covered with mines and barbed wire, and completely exposed to raking machine gun fire from pillboxes.

The relatively brief battle of Omaha Beach, significantly more critical than the fighting that went on at the other four assault beaches, foreshadowed the titanic struggle for the rest of Normandy.

To make matters worse, there were only five exits along the entire length of beach—all of them heavily fortified. One was a paved road, the other four mere cart-tracks barely six feet wide. If the Allies had had any other choice they certainly would not have selected Omaha as a landing site. But it was the only workable link between Utah (which wasn't as heavily fortified or adversely laid out) and the British assault beaches to the east. The rest of the coast was made up of rocky reefs and sheer cliffs.

Geography and Erwin Rommel were destiny for those men on Omaha that day. By the end of 1941 Hitler controlled the entire western coast of Europe from Norway to Spain, and he had decided "to make this front impregnable against every enemy." He devised an awesome scheme—a wall made up of concrete, steel, guns, and three hundred thousand men—to fulfill his vow and made it come true, using round-the-clock slave labor. There were 15,000 reinforced concrete defense posts, many of them designed by Hitler himself. And, naturally, defenses were strongest at points closest to England—the Pas de Calais and the area from Le Havre to the Netherlands.

By June 1944, Rommel, who had taken over the defense of the Western front, realized that the only hope of stopping an Allied invasion was at the water's edge. By then he had barricaded the shoreline from Cherbourg to Calais with half a million assorted anti-invasion obstacles and more than four million mines. "In the short time left before the great offensive starts," Rommel wrote to his commanders that spring, "we must succeed in bringing all defenses to such a standard that they will hold up against the strongest attacks. The enemy must be annihilated before he reaches our main battlefield. We must stop him in the water."

On Omaha Beach Rommel almost succeeded.

The first assault waves onto the beach at H hour (6:30 a.m.) were to be made by two regiments of the proud First Infantry Division—the "Big Red One," a rare American division with significant combat experience—and two regiments from the less experienced Twenty-Ninth Division. These four regiments, about thirteen or fourteen thousand men altogether, made up the assault force for Omaha Beach, four miles from end to end. As luck had it, the high winds and strong currents made a mess of carefully laid plans to match up each regiment with the particular sector where it had been rehearsed to perform a specific tactical mission. The landing craft were carried to sections of the beach that were totally unfamiliar to the men—disorienting and confusing them in the gray breaking light of dawn.

Most of the men landing on Omaha did not realize that they were outclassed as an army. Allied and Hollywood propaganda notwithstanding, military historians today acknowledge that the German army was the outstanding fighting force of the Second World War and that it could be defeated only against overwhelmingly favorable conditions. Its soldiers and officers had had far more disciplined training for war than ours—and five more years of experience. Rommel's defenses were among the most powerful encountered by Americans in the entire war. They included eight reinforced concrete bunkers, almost impervious to bombardment from the sea. These emplacements held high-velocity guns 75mm or larger—large enough to destroy a tank or wreak havoc on a landing craft. There were thirty-five pillboxes with various types of artillery and automatic weapons, six mortar pits, thirty-five rocket-launching sites, and eighty-five machine gun nests. But that wasn't the worst of it. Two or three miles inland a highly experienced artillery regiment had established a defensive position. The

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official history of the 16th Regiment—the first to hit the beach that morning—drily states:

> Range cards found in defensive positions contained evidence of detailed preparations for invasion. The enemy even had information detailing differences between an LST [Landing Ship/Tank] - 5 and an LST-6. Their field of fire . . . zeroed in on the beaches was the culmination of . . . infinite painstaking to insure infliction of the greatest possible damage on an invading force.

Omar Bradley, the respected field general who that day was responsible for the American assault forces, had been told by his intelligence people that the German defenders of Omaha comprised units of the 716th Infantry Division, a defensive outfit, unequipped to counterattack, and low in morale. Half of this unit was manned by poorly trained Polish and Russian conscripts and inexperienced teenaged troops. The Americans were expecting no more than 1,000 troops to be manning the defenses at Omaha and, although their fire-power and defensive installations were formidable, the odds seemed good for the thirteen thousand men who were to make up the first several assault waves. What the Americans did not know was that weeks earlier Rommel had ordered the 352nd Infantry Division into the area. This move was routinely reported to Allied Intelligence by the French Resistance via the usual method: carrier pigeon. The procedure was to dispatch each message twice, just in case German soldiers armed with shotguns killed one of the birds. This time the pigeon hunters got both birds.

When Bradley heard, late in the morning, that the beaches were being defended by the 716th and the 352nd, he was stunned. The 352nd, unlike most German divisions in France, was made up of three grenadier regiments of tough, skilled, disciplined veterans of the Russian front. Nor did Bradley know that the Germans manning the defenses along Omaha had escaped almost unscathed from the air and naval bombardment that preceded H-Hour. Attacking blind through a heavy overcast, the Liberator bombers, in their anxiety to avoid bombing onto the approaching assault troops, had dropped hundreds of tons of high explosive onto the fields *behind* the formidable beach defenses.

The 47-minute naval bombardment that had preceded the first assault waves was also largely ineffective. From 6,000 yards offshore it was difficult to fire accurately through the mist, dust, and smoke. The naval shelling did no more than the bombing to reduce the fighting power of the defenses that had been constructed to be almost immune from direct fire from the sea.

Among the tired, wet, scared groups of men huddled behind the sea wall waiting to be bombarded to death piecemeal by the enemies' mortars and artillery, a small number of leaders began to emerge.

The first elements of the 16th and 116th Regiments coming ashore faced by far the greatest concentration of German fire on the entire invasion front. As the first landing craft dropped their ramps just short of the beach and the Americans loaded down with 75 or 100 pounds of equipment began to jump into the surf, the Germans opened fire from every position along Omaha, their machine guns raking back and forth across the waterline. Many soldiers were even dropped off prematurely into water over their heads by naval personnel anxious to beat a hasty retreat from the German artillery.

Max Hastings, one of the leading historians of Overlord, states:

> There is no more demanding task for infantry than to press home an attack across open ground under heavy fire, amid heavy casualties. . . . V Corps' plan for Omaha eschewed tactical subtleties . . . and any attempt to seize the five vital beach exits by manoeuvre. Instead, [Omaha commander] General Gerow committed his men to hurling themselves frontally against the most strongly defended areas in the assault zone. This was an act of hubris.

The planned support for the men—armored vehicles, tanks, and heavy artillery to take out the strong points—had, in the meantime, foundered in ten-knot winds and in four-to-eight-foot seas that left the men soaking wet and severely seasick. By the time they reached the beaches, most had thrown up their breakfasts and were numb from crouching in the cramped and crowded landing craft during the three-hour trip to shore.

In this state they stumbled forward into a torrent of fire, seeking whatever shelter they could find among the mined beach obstacles, or falling down and playing dead on the exposed beach. It took some of them thirty or forty minutes to inch themselves across the exposed beach to the sea wall at the head of the beach that provided some small degree of protection from the machine gun fire but not from the mortar fire.

Stephen Ambrose, the latest historian of the cross-channel invasion, has collected a large number of eye-witness accounts, one of which conveys the horror of the experience:

> Sgt. Thomas Valance survived, barely. "As we came down the ramp, we were in water about knee-high and started to do what we were trained to do, that is, move forward and then crouch and fire. One problem was we didn't quite know what to fire at. I saw some tracers coming from a concrete emplacement which, to me, looked mammoth. I never anticipated any gun emplacements being that big. I shot at it but there was no way I was going to knock out a German concrete emplacement with a .30-caliber rifle."

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The tide was coming in, rapidly, and the men around Valance were getting hit. He found it difficult to stay on his feet—like most infantrymen, he was badly overloaded, soaking wet, exhausted, trying to struggle through wet sand and avoid the obstacles with mines attached to them. "I abandoned my equipment, which was dragging me down into the water.

"It became evident rather quickly that we weren't going to accomplish much. I remember floundering in the water with my hand up in the air, trying to get my balance, when I was first shot through the palm of my hand, then through the knuckle." . . .

Valance was hit again, in the left thigh by a bullet that broke his hipbone. He took two additional flesh wounds. His pack was hit twice, and the chin strap on his helmet was severed by a bullet. He crawled up the beach "and staggered up against the seawall and sort of collapsed there and, as a matter of fact, spent the whole day in that same position. Essentially my part in the invasion had ended by having been wiped out as most of my company was. The bodies of my buddies were washing ashore and I was the one live body in amongst so many of my friends, all of whom were dead, in many cases very severely blown to pieces." [1]

By 8 a.m., it was clear that a catastrophe was unfolding. The first several assault waves had been decimated, and almost all of the tanks and artillery pieces had been lost. The men who had not been killed outright or seriously wounded huddled terrified and demoralized in the lee of the sea wall as the tide rolled in behind them. The beach was so narrow in places that only seven or eight yards separated the crowd of men and the sea. The men were virtually leaderless because many of their officers had been killed on arrival or had become separated from their boat sections. Individual units had not only been landed far from where they were supposed to but had dispersed all over the beach. And the heavy but fragile mobile radios, the only link to the high command out at sea, were either lost in the surf or damaged and inoperable.

Among the thousands of men crouched on that beach in the early morning of D-Day a serious paralysis had set in. To the Germans looking down over the beach from the western fortifications built into the cliffs at Raz de la Percée, it looked as though the defenders had achieved Rommel's objective of stopping the invasion at the water's edge. And indeed they radioed this news to Army Group B, Rommel's headquarters. It was told that a great many tanks and vehicles could be seen burning and destroyed, and hundreds of wounded and dead could be seen lying on the sand.

Aboard the cruiser *Augusta*, General Bradley watched the disaster unfold. He later wrote,

> As the morning lengthened, my worries deepened over the alarming and fragmentary reports we picked up on the navy net. From those messages we could piece together only an incoherent account of sinkings, swampings, heavy enemy fire and chaos on the beaches. Though we could see it dimly through the haze and hear the echo of its guns, the battle belonged that morning to the thin, wet line of khaki that dragged itself ashore on the Channel coast of France.

By mid-morning Bradley "gained the impression that our forces had suffered an irreversible catastrophe." At that time he seriously considered stopping the landings on Omaha and diverting the follow-up waves to Utah.

If that had happened, and Rommel had been able to push the Americans back into the sea, he might have rolled up the entire invasion by splitting the isolated American army at Utah Beach from the British Second Army and strangling them each separately. But that did not happen.

It was clear that events had overtaken the elaborate plans to capture Omaha. Whatever happened was now out of the hands of General Bradley, commander of all of the American Forces on D Day; out of the hands of General Gerow, commander of the forces on Omaha Beach, the Fifth Corps, and his two divisional commanders General Huebner, of the First Division, and General Gerhardt, of the Twenty-ninth. These were the men who had made the plans but they did not have to carry them out. They remained twelve miles out to sea, waiting for reports to come in.

For the twelve thousand surviving troops, virtually cut off from each other and their sources of information and supplies, and facing a combat-hardened enemy twice as strong as expected, without supporting tanks or artillery, disorganized and demoralized—their fate and the fate of Omaha Beach was now in their own hands.

It was individuals, not divisions, who determined the outcome that day. Disciplined training and experience are

[1] From *D-Day June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, by Stephen E. Ambrose. Simon &Schuster, 655 pages, $30.

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enormously helpful to the combat soldier in overcoming his terror in battle. When these are absent or minimal, as they were that morning, the fighting man must depend on his own personal motivations—his sense of honor, of duty, of loyalty to his comrades—and the leadership of those around him.

Among the tired, wet, scared groups of men huddled behind the sea wall waiting to be bombarded to death piecemeal by the enemies' mortars and artillery, a small number of leaders—officers, noncoms, and privates—began to emerge, and by example, exhortation, and bullying began to move the men up that slope, strewn with barbed wire and sown with mines, inch by inch. They were men like Staff Sergeant William Courtney and Private First Class William Braher of A Company's Fifth Ranger Battalion, who were probably the first Americans to reach the top of the cliff on the extreme western flank, around 8:30 a.m. When they gained the summit, they sent word to a company of the 116th Infantry below to follow them up, and a handful of men did so.

The 116th was new to combat, and having mislanded in front of a very heavily defended section of the beach, it lost most of its officers and so had become confused and dangerously demoralized. That is until General Norman Cota arrived at the western end of the beach and began prodding and rousing his men, leading from the front—a posture he was famous for—and exposing himself to enemy fire.

This was the situation everywhere along Omaha that morning, especially among the men who had never been in combat before. Every instinct told them to stay put and keep under cover. On the eastern flank of the beachhead, the men of the 16th Regiment of the 1st Division were pinned down by the strong defenses in front of one of the main exits from the beach—one of the tactical objectives of the Regiment. It was Sgt. Philip Streczyk of Company E who charged across the mine field and, using a bangalore torpedo, made the first breach in the enemy wire. Almost immediately he was followed by Lt. John Spaulding leading a remnant of E Company up the slope to attack the strong point guarding the western side of the beach exit—four concrete shelters, two pillboxes, five machine guns. The small force was eventually successful in wiping out this strong point and went on to attack the eastern strong point guarding the exit. The official history of the 16th Regiment describes what Lt. Spaulding and his band of men did:

> At first this particular strong point was practically impossible to destroy, for, in addition to the extremely stubborn resistance encountered, the strong point with its maze of underground shelter trenches and dugouts was virtually "untouchable." However, following a barrage of hand grenades, the [men] closed with the enemy, destroyed many of them and captured an officer and 20 Germans. . . . Of the 183 men who had landed, 100 were dead, wounded or missing in action. . . . However, one avenue of escape from the beach was now open, perilous though it was. . . . It was this small path which for forty-eight hours was the main personnel exit of the entire V Corps.

Individual men—a succession of individual men, on their own, or leading small groups of ten or twenty, not under orders or according to some master plan, but out of a sense of desperation, or responsibility to their comrades, or honor, or pride, or all of them mixed together—began driving vital wedges into the German defenses all along the Omaha front. By mid-afternoon the Americans had overrun even the strongest of the German positions on Omaha.

We have a tendency to think that our postmodern wars can be won with machines operated by technicians at a computer console—no flesh and bone at stake. This was the view that the Allied generals had in WWII—the model that said substitute steel for flesh whenever possible. They were surprised to find that that formula did not work. Sooner or later, men had to close with men, disarm them or kill them and occupy the ground they held. Ruthless human action is required in battle. Plans won't do it. Explosives won't do it. Only desperate human endeavor can prevail in the end.

It is difficult to keep such stern notions in mind amidst the festivities of this weekend. The further you get away from the beaches the more it seems like a circus-come-to-town atmosphere. There are huge crowds in many town squares milling around, waving little American flags and shouting and cheering every bus that passes whether it contains old Vets or not. For about three dollars you can buy one of the "authentique" crickets that the American paratroopers used to identify each other in the darkness of early

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morning. There are stands that sell 50th Anniversary T-shirts for ten or twenty dollars, and other stands that sell those wonderfully smelling grilled spicy sausages—*merguez*—covered with browned onions on a toasted bun.

Every young Frenchman in Normandy and his girlfriend seem to be masquerading this weekend as GIs—1944 style helmets, leggings—the works. Some clever entrepreneur has cornered the market on surplus U.S. Jeeps with all the standard Army insignia and is renting them. You wouldn't know it isn't standard Army until you see the scruffy looking French kids and their pretty girl friends driving in them. The signs all over the region remind you that the close relationship between patriotism and profit has not been suspended for D-Day. There are signs that announce "Senior Golf" at the Omaha Beach Golf Course, and signs that say "Welcome to Our Liberators—Wine and Cheese Our Speciality." (You wonder whether, back in 1940, the signs didn't say "Welcome to Our Captors—Wine and Cheese Our Speciality.")

The several thousand servicemen and -women who participated and helped support the events of the commemoration are smart-looking, respectful, and infinitely polite—sir-ring and mamming you at every encounter. One corporal, asked what he thought about what was going on, answered drily, "Good. It's good." Then with a wisdom beyond his years and a smile he couldn't quite hide, he added, "Except they keep movin' the Vets further and further back."

It was true. At all of the formal events including the main one at the American Cemetery at which Clinton spoke—except for a handful of selected Vets used for media purposes to be available for presidential handshakes—the best seats were assigned to the Big Fish and their wives. And what was left—a football field away—was given to those our president had come to honor and thank so movingly. It reminds you of that great old Bill Mauldin cartoon of 1944—the one in which two officers are looking at a mountain sunset and one

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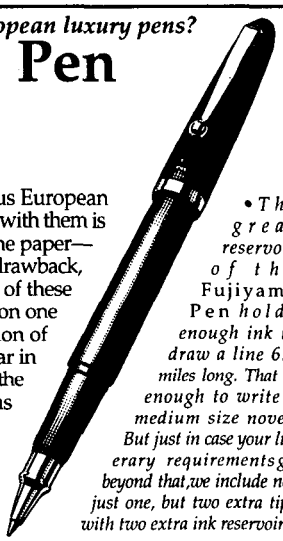

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says to the other, "Beautiful view. Is there one for the enlisted men?"

I suppose it was best summed up by a handsome elderly lady from Seattle. A young marine had just asked her husband—one of the first to land on Utah Beach—to move away from where he was taking a picture. The veteran asked him why and the marine replied, "I'm sorry, Sir, but the President will be coming by here." At that moment you could hear a little gasp of indignation from the handsome lady. "Since when," she muttered with undisguised contempt, "does the President come before a vet. I think they've got their priorities a little mixed up." But the marine had moved on to another old soldier.

The way a nation fights its wars tells us something about its culture as well as its politics, economics, and technology. It is hard to imagine the French undertaking a cross-channel invasion to rescue the English if the shoe had been on the other foot and the Nazis had occupied Great Britain. It is hard to imagine the French fighting desperately for anything—even France. It took only about a month to force the French to surrender after the Germans invaded. The historian Martin Gilbert reminds us that on June 11, 1940, Churchill flew across the channel to Briare on the Loire, where the French Government had relocated, in a last minute effort to stiffen French resolve:

> Churchill urged the French to make Paris a fortress, to fight in every street. A great city, he said, if stubbornly defended, "absorbed immense armies." At this, a British eye-witness noted, "the French perceptibly froze." To make Paris "a city of ruins," replied Marshal Pétain, "will not affect the issue." The French troops, said Reynaud, "were worn out through lack of sleep and shattered by the action of enemy bombers."

A week later France surrendered. The French had decided that life itself and the French way of life in particular was dearer to them than freedom.

Is it conceivable today that an American Army of citizen soldiers could muster the required ruthlessness, will, or whatever it is that it takes to confront a determined, even fanatic enemy? Most of the men on Omaha on D-Day didn't have what it took. That is only human and understandable. Some men did, and were able to get enough of the others to follow. And that's what made the crucial difference. We are talking about matters of degree and quantity. In war as in life there has to be a critical mass of men with initiative and determination before things can happen. In the final analysis, the French nation, the French culture, the French people were not able to come up with that critical mass.

Times have changed in the last fifty years. Our attitudes about men, masculinity, national loyalty, war, and legitimate authority have all changed markedly. Since the end of World War II we have fought a number of large and small wars, and in all of them in which we were opposed by a well-trained, resourceful, and determined enemy—whether the North Koreans and Chinese, the North Vietnamese, or the Somalians—we may have endured but we did not prevail.

The changes that have occurred in the culture in the last two or three decades have had some good, some bad, and some unintended consequences. One of the unintended consequences has been to remove war as one of the two major instruments of foreign policy. Left with diplomacy, and a little inefficient economic bullying which often hurts our economy as much or more as our enemies, we are correctly perceived as a great muscle-bound giant who can win contests of muscle size but who can't move.

We need not be reminded of the many manifestations of the withering of the legitimate authority that is crucial in holding any civilization together—law, morals, religion, and their respective representatives. The notion of personal loyalty, to say nothing of national loyalty, brings forth sniggers from cultural sophisticates, resulting in a kind of reverse jingoism. There is nothing right in America, nothing good about America. And this seems to cut across all classes, except, perhaps the new immigrant class. Radical individualism, narcissism, multiculturalism, tribalism, separatism—all suggest a centrifugal force at work that seems to ask whether there is anything in America worth fighting for.

One corporal, asked what he thought about what was going on, answered drily, "Good. It's good." Then with a wisdom beyond his years and a smile he couldn't quite hide, he added, "Except they keep movin' the Vets further and further back."

Fifty years ago men were less doubtful than they are today about their role in the culture. They were the breadwinners and the protectors of women and children against external threats and dangers. This kind of role requires a certain amount of preparation and "training" that each culture provides in its own way, to fit the challenges and dangers that its menfolk are likely to face. Today, there are very strong forces at work reshaping men's role in their relationship to women and society.

Beginning in school, and perhaps earlier, little boys and young men are nowadays taught that they must be sensitive, compassionate, not-too-competitive, not-too-aggressive, not-too-ambitious or lustful for power, not-too-sexually-assertive; they are taught also to disavow their natural discomfort about homosexuality, and to disavow the importance of the so-called "manly virtues" as childish or adolescent or declassé, or reactionary, or mindless—notions like courage, honor, duty, loyalty, comradeship.

At the next Battle of Omaha, where will we find the Sgt. Streczyks and Lt. Spauldings to lead us off the beach? ❐

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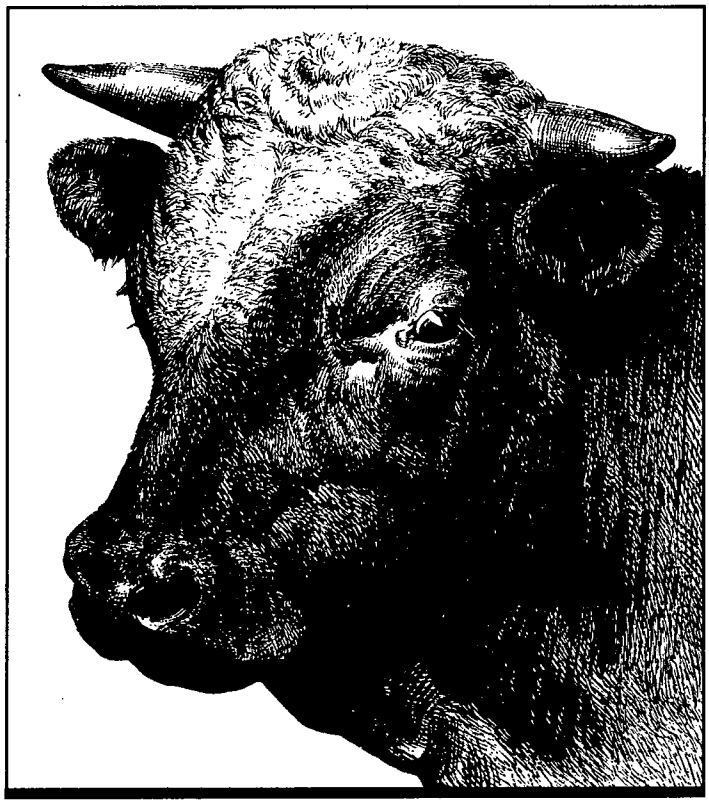
James Ring Adams

The Ties That Blind

Is it surprising that Hillary's beef brokers went into business with BCCI—in which the privileged few won big and the disposable many lost badly?



The public has an overwhelming interest in knowing what business networks have claims on a president and his family. In this context, Hillary's windfall in the futures market is chilling. The extraordinary live cattle contracts market of 1978-79 wasn't as innocent as Hillary now portrays it, nor were her associations—sleazy and otherwise—as limited as the White House would have us believe. Hillary must still feel grateful to James Blair and Tyson Foods, Inc., who allegedly steered her to her trades; and to Refco and its president Thomas Dittmer, which brokered them. The White House has called recently on Leo Melamed, the genius of the futures market, and by extension the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, for a substantial favor that has helped them to defuse the cattle-futures scandal. And the Clintons' futures trading may have made them further beholden to the Stephens bond empire of Arkansas—and entangled them indirectly but significantly with the Pakistani financiers who brought us BCCI.

Without knowing such patterns of private obligation, the public can't tell whether its leaders are serving the common good or betraying it. In certain contexts, even apparently neutral policy measures, such as reform of bank regulation, can have sinister connotations. The way a president has been willing to make money speaks volumes about the economic policies he will advocate and the practices he will tolerate—particularly for one who has shown no qualms about using the federal regulatory and law enforcement apparatus for political ends.

Hillary and the Cattle Market

The legend of the Clinton administration will forever include the tale of Hillary's 10,000 percent return on her investment in cattle futures. Journalists have shown that her broker had to bend the rules—at the very least—to steer her these profits. (Although prices rose steadily for most of the period, someone who bought at the beginning and sold at the peak could only have made a 1,700 percent return, not *10,000* percent.) But there's been remarkably little reporting on the buccaneering waters of the Chicago futures market

James Ring Adams is The American Spectator*'s special investigator on Whitewater. He is the author of* The Big Fix: Inside the S&L Scandal *(Wiley) and co-author (with Douglas Frantz) of* A Full Service Bank: How BCCI Stole Billions Around the World *(Pocket Books).*

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where she made her fortune and the lurid crew that handled her account.[1]

Hillary's trading came to light in mid-March after Lloyd Cutler took over as White House counsel. In line with his new policy of "openness," the White House admitted to *New York Times* investigators that she had plunged $1,000 in the notoriously choppy futures market in October 1978, when her husband had emerged as the clear front-runner in his first race for governor. James Blair, general counsel for Tyson Foods, Inc., was her guide to the market. By the time she closed her accounts in May 1980, she had cleared $99,540, which allowed the strapped couple to put up a down payment on their house and buy tax-exempt municipal bonds. Deflecting some well-justified cries of hypocrisy, Hillary distinguished her earnings from the 1980s "greed" her husband had campaigned against; she was just providing for her family, she said, not raiding and pillaging corporations. Even so, the Clintons for years had treated this windfall as one of their guiltier secrets. It was only after the *New York Times* scoop that they released their tax returns for 1978 and '79.

The White House has called recently on Leo Melamed, the genius of the futures market, and by extension the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, for a substantial favor that has helped them to defuse the cattle-futures scandal.

The First Couple had reason to be embarrassed. Hillary had worked through the Springdale, Arkansas, office of Refco, a fast-growing Chicago-based commodities broker. Its Arkansas outpost catered primarily to Tyson Foods, the nation's largest poultry firm, whose operations give the small Ozark town a pungent, penetrating odor. Hillary's personal broker was a professional poker player and 13-year veteran of Tyson Foods named Robert L. "Red" Bone, who had already compiled a substantial record of exchange rules infractions. Just a month before he went to work for Hillary, he had completed a one-year partial suspension on charges of plotting to manipulate the egg-futures market on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. (He later received a second, more serious suspension for violating the first one.)

More significantly, at the end of Hillary's first year of trading, the Chicago Merc itself suspended Bone for three years for "allocating" trades—letting favored customers take the winning trades and dumping the losers on the rest. The action cited "serious and repeated violations of record-keeping functions, order-entry procedures, margin requirements and hedge procedures." Hillary's account wasn't specifically at issue, but it fit the pattern: her return on her first day of trading—more than $5,000 on $1,000 down—would have been mathematically impossible if Exchange rules were strictly followed.

On October 15, 1979, Hillary's own investment adviser, Tyson counsel Blair, filed a suit charging Red Bone, Refco, and its president Thomas Dittmer with systematically taking their customers to the cleaners. Dittmer, Blair claimed, not only was feeding false information to Red Bone and his customers, he was telling them he would do exactly the opposite of his actual plans. Blair charged that Dittmer would say to bet on a fall in the cattle futures price and then would force the price up. Then he would pass the word to bet on rising prices and proceed to dump supplies on the market, forcing the price down. Blair said these tactics cost him and his trading group more than $15 million.

Hillary's phenomenal success becomes even more of a mystery considering that her main adviser was having such a miserable experience, and Blair himself tried to cover up the discrepancy. On January 22, 1980, after reaching a settlement, both sides to the suit petitioned to seal the records. He opposed an attempt by another unhappy customer to get access to the records, and he fought vehemently when the *Wall Street Journal* successfully sued earlier this year to unseal the suit. The *Journal*'s purpose, he said, "appears to be the unjustified hope that it would find something in the file that could be used to damage the President's wife."

But the focus on Hillary's own trades has obscured a broader question: What was a nice Democratic politician's wife doing in a place like the futures market, anyway?

The Wild World of Futures

Trading in futures on the Chicago exchanges is one of the surest ways for an investment novice to lose his shirt (or her blouse). Controversy has always swirled around the two institutions that make these markets: the Board of Trade and especially the upstart Mercantile Exchange, which has a well-earned reputation as the most bare-knuckles floor in America. Unlike the stock exchanges, which trade in shares in the ownership of corporations, the futures markets sell bets against the future prices of commodities. They provide a valuable service, allowing farmers access to some of the value of their crops well before harvest, by selling contracts to deliver a set amount at a set price. But unless you really need a hopper of soybeans dumped on your front step in four months, a delivery contract is obviously riskier to buy than a stock or bond. And futures trading is cutthroat by its structure. If you buy a contract, thinking prices will go up,

[1] Assuming a leveraged first investment at 10 percent margin, which is futures-speak for putting a down payment on the contract of 10 percent of its face value, carried by the broker in a margin account. In this standard arrangement, the broker in effect gives the customer credit for the balance as long as cash reserves meet exchange standards. If the value of the contract falls below the purchase price, the broker can make a "margin call" for the balance. This is when most investors get wiped out.

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someone is selling, thinking prices will drop. For every winning bet, there has to be a loser.

Life in this market is tough, even without the tricky question of regulation. To work well, any market has to be hedged with rules and definitions—but whoever makes these rules stands to siphon off some of the economic benefits. In the name of customer protection, government bureaucrats can overregulate and increase their own power. In the name of market efficiency, the holders of exchange seats can give themselves advantages over their clients. There is also a third way: self-regulating traders can protect their positions by cutting politicians in on their take.

The Merc and the Board of Trade now run two of the best funded political action committees in the country. In 1993, the Merc's Commodity Futures Political Fund disbursed nearly $200,000, making it the eighth most generous finance, insurance, and real estate PAC. Member firm Archer Daniels Midland, a giant in agribusiness, recently ranked fourth as a source of unlimited "soft money" contributions to Democratic Party organs. (ADM chairman Dwayne Andreas, a critic as well as heavy user of the exchanges, gave $600,000 in the sixteen months before May 1992, mostly to the Republicans.) The exchanges run elaborate lobbies in Washington and hire government insiders for their own operations. They also target well-placed congressmen for political contributions and other favors. Beneficiaries have included former House Ways and Means chairman Dan Rostenkowski, Senate Republican leader Robert Dole, and former Senate majority leader Robert Byrd. Such lobbying has helped the futures world preserve a large degree of self-regulation. The federal regulators of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) may not be the toothless wonders they are sometimes made out to be, but they certainly inspire far less fear than the lawyers from the Securities Exchange Commission do in the stock market.

During the 1970s, the Merc invented futures trading in foreign currencies and stock indices and metamorphosed from the bane of Midwest farmers into a major player in global finance. Credit for the growth goes to Leo Melamed, a World War II refugee first elected Merc chairman in 1969 and a dominant power ever since. Melamed and his circle controlled the Merc up to his retirement, and for all his achievements, he has been blamed for condoning lax standards in floor trading. It may be no accident that the main defenders of Hillary's trades have been Melamed and his protégé, current Merc chairman John F. Sandner. Melamed wrote an analysis of Hillary's trades for the White House and agreed to take follow-up calls from reporters.

Despite the isolation of Springdale, a northern suburb of Fayetteville where Hillary had been teaching at the University of Arkansas Law School, the young governor's wife was plugged into one of the rising powers on the Chicago exchange. Refco, then and now, meant Thomas Dittmer, one of the boldest traders on the Merc. Dittmer pulled off a number of coups in the early 1980s, including a panic in soybean prices and a near corner on coffee, but his most memorable success was the boom in cattle futures that enriched Hillary. Dittmer's fans say he used his background as a cattleman to predict shortages in the herds coming to market. His detractors, including a number of former employees, charge that he padded his profits by feeding customers misleading information and then trading against them. Juries found against Dittmer in several suits, including one brought by former brokers from Refco's Springfield office, but the Federal Court of Appeals in St. Louis later overturned the judgments. The complaints generated a congressional study, stiff regulatory discipline for Refco and Dittmer, and legislation tightening futures regulations.

The focus on Hillary's own trades has obscured a broader question: What was a nice Democratic politician's wife doing in a place like the futures market, anyway?

Dittmer used his windfall to make Refco a global player in metal refining, financial futures, and money management. In 1981, he joined the elite club of thirty-seven dealers who buy Treasury securities for the Federal Reserve. His lavish entertainments raised eyebrows, even among the nouveaux riches of the Merc. For Leo Melamed's retirement party in 1991, Dittmer transformed his plush Evanston, Illinois home into a replica of a trading room, with interconnecting telephones at each table and a bank of computer terminals and quote machines that scrolled Melamed's life story.

BCCI's Quest for Political Connections

Hillary's success in this milieu makes no sense on her terms. She and her husband were clearly receiving a heavy favor, not only from James Blair and Tyson, but from Refco itself. Whether or not the Clintons were ever asked for anything in return, their tolerance toward corner-cutting economic gun-slingers had to be shaped by these surprising alliances, so at variance with the Clintons' populist rhetoric. The connection with Refco entangled the Clintons, however remotely, in another segment of the web of influence-buying that was then being spun across the world by the Bank of Credit and Commerce International. By itself, this tie might not amount to much, but it takes on added interest from the complex relations between the Clintons and the Stephens family of Little Rock, financiers and Arkansas king-makers with their own BCCI entanglement. The role of Jackson Stephens as financial backer of Governor Clinton has already been widely reported, as has his service to the

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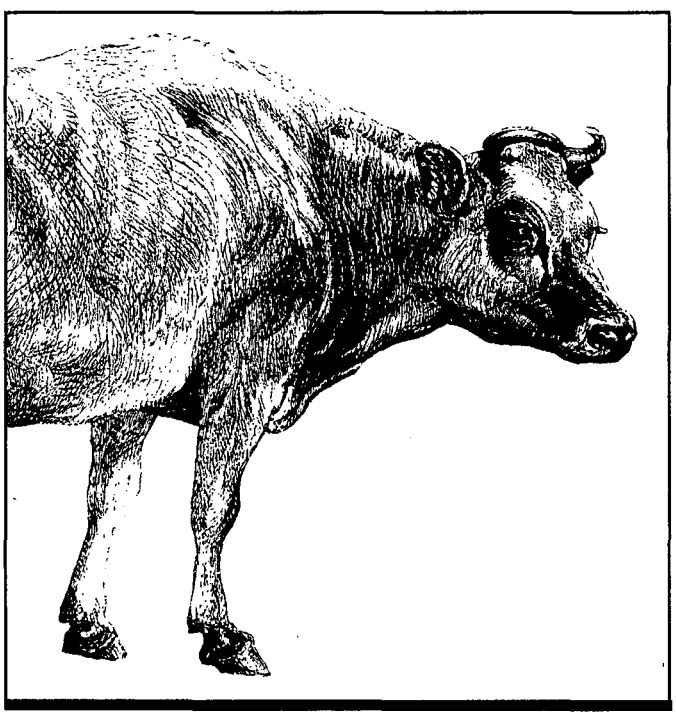
BCCI's penetration of the American financial market (see *TAS*, November 1992). But almost nothing has been said about the equally fascinating appearance of Refco in the affairs of the world's most corrupt bank. Refco and Stephens also maintained business ties, but it's an open question whether these involved the BCCI. It's also an open question whether Bill Clinton's brush with this world is influencing the federal government's efforts, or lack of effort, at getting to the bottom of the BCCI scandal.

It can definitely be said, however, that Refco's international operations have attracted the interest of the untanglers of BCCI's affairs. BCCI is not only the world's largest single bank fraud, but also the most ubiquitous. It was founded in the Persian Gulf in 1972 by a Pakistani visionary named Agha Hasan Abedi, who inspired a cult-like devotion from his officers, primarily Urdu-speaking Pakistanis; he also steadfastly ignored economic reality, and wound up losing more than $10 billion. Increasingly desperate to cover his losses, he opened his doors to the world's vast underground economy, and BCCI became the central bank for terrorists, spies, arms dealers, and drug lords from Burma to Colombia. At the same time, his agents tried to buy their way into every political elite they encountered—including the Arkansas establishment that was watching the rise of the Clintons.



In November 1977, Abedi met in Little Rock with Jimmy Carter's confidant Bert Lance and investment banker Jackson Stephens, a power above and beyond Bill Clinton. Out of this meeting came Abedi's celebrated takeover of an interstate banking chain based in Washington, D.C., patriotically renamed First American Bankshares and put in the hands of super-insider Clark Clifford. Coincidentally or not, Dittmer and Refco picked up a new client in the aftermath.

His name was Abdullah Darwaish. From 1975 to 1981, Darwaish was chairman of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) and the Department of Private Affairs (DPA) for Abu Dhabi's ruler, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan. As such, Darwaish managed one of the most fabulous fortunes in the world. At one point, oil money flowed into Abu Dhabi, a component of the United Arab Emirates, at the rate of $1 *billion* a month. Local law made petroleum royalties the personal property of the sheikh. A sharp-faced, sharp-eyed traditionalist, who preferred Bedouin tents and hunting to boardrooms, Sheikh Zayed delegated his fortune to a series of advisers, including Darwaish and, fatefully, Agha Hasan Abedi. The far-sighted Abedi had cultivated Sheikh Zayed well before the mid-seventies boom in oil prices, taking the avid falconer on lavish bustard hunts in the wilds of Pakistan. (Abedi's agents also catered to the less wholesome tastes of the portly Crown Prince Khalifa.) Zayed became the primary financial backer of the BCCI and still owns its remains. When Abedi decided to buy the Washington, D.C. bank that Jack Stephens was peddling, he advanced one of Sheikh Zayed's minor sons as a stockholder, with Darwaish acting as the boy's agent.

BCCI Investments With Refco

The deal apparently whetted Darwaish's appetite for American investments. Around October 1979, he and several assistants set up a Panamanian shell corporation to trade in the American commodities markets. They worked through a Swiss brokerage and placed their orders with Refco. Through November, they transferred more than $100 million of Sheikh Zayed's money to America, primarily through BCCI headquarters in London. The investments started with huge purchases of copper, although later, using both Refco and Drexel Burnham Lambert, Darwaish began to speculate disastrously in U.S. Treasury bill futures.

Dittmer put out the welcome mat for his new clients. In the fall of 1980, he invited Darwaish's assistant, Riaz Saleem Aslam, to dinner. A year later, just as the operation was about to collapse, Refco Capital lent the investors $650,000 for their account at Drexel.

The trouble with these deals, Sheikh Zayed's lawyers later charged, was that Darwaish and his allies were in the habit of allocating the profits from winning trades to their personal accounts, and charging the losses to Abu Dhabi. It didn't help that they ran up many more losses than wins. Ultimately, Sheikh Zayed charged that they defrauded him of $96 million. Aslam was arrested and suspended from the DPA at the end of December 1991, and Darwaish was fired a week later. To the embarrassment of Clark Clifford, Darwaish continued to be listed as a major shareholder in the takeover bid for First American filed with the SEC three months later. Sheikh Zayed's agents subsequently sued Refco in Chicago federal court over the losses.

Refco compiled a remarkable record of dealings with troubled Middle Eastern banks and bankers. In 1982, a new division called Refco International began placing orders for

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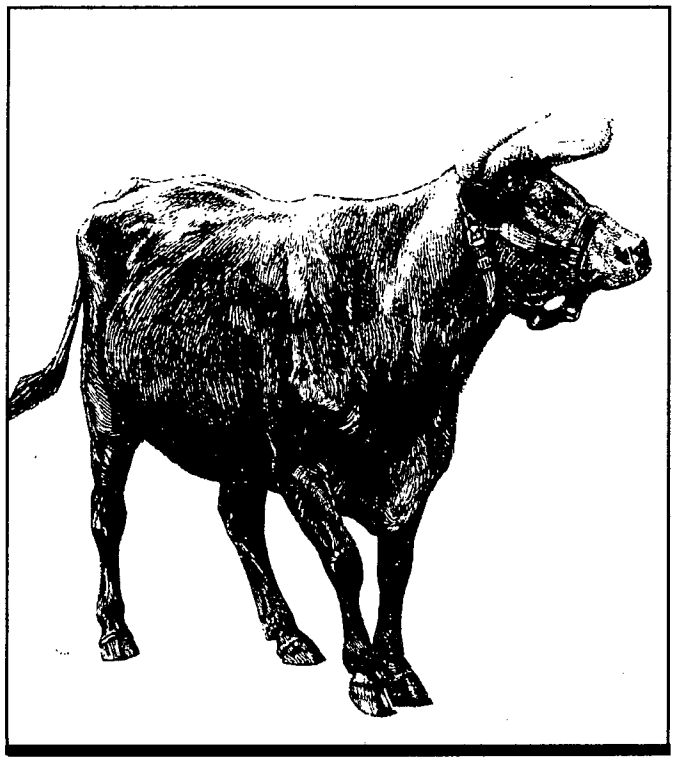
a Dubai-based businessman named A.W. Galadari. Galadari owned the Union Bank of the Middle East, one of the largest in the United Arab Emirates. When Union Bank crashed in 1983, Refco dunned him for the $6 million margin in his account. Galadari also wound up owing $20 million to Drexel Burnham, and large portions of both debts are still outstanding.

But the biggest loser with Refco was BCCI itself. From 1983 to 1985, the bank speculated recklessly in the futures market on U.S. Treasury bonds. The futures were a bet on the direction of interest rates and required split-second timing; one incredulous auditor found that BCCI was buying contracts and leaving them in desk drawers. Estimates of the losses reach $860 million, although BCCI may have dumped other losses on this debacle. And if trades were intentionally matched, such practices could be used to disguise a deliberate looting of the bank. Because the names of two senior Saudi intelligence officials appear on some accounts, some investigators speculate that money was funneled to the CIA's covert operations. Refco was one of the four brokers that handled these trades.



Capcom's Seat on the Merc

The head of the BCCI treasury department, Syed Ziauddin Ali Akbar, took the fall for the trading losses. Akbar was a slim, normally dapper figure who will always be remembered as the hangdog fugitive in a denim jacket arrested in 1991 as he stepped off the ferry in Calais in flight from a British warrant. Akbar left BCCI in 1986 after the trading disaster but in something less than disgrace. The bank had made a $32 million investment in an international brokerage called Capcom Financial Services, Ltd., that Akbar helped set up in 1984. Its shareholders included Sheikh Kamal Adham, the extraordinarily effective head of Saudi intelligence during the 1970s, and two associates, and two of America's best known cable magnates, Robert Magness and Larry Romrell of Tele-Communications Inc. As late as 1988, a senior BCCI officer recommended Capcom and Akbar to a client, who turned out to be an undercover agent for U. S. Customs.

As a result of the recommendation, Akbar was indicted in Tampa in 1988 for money-laundering, and found guilty in a British trial. Akbar has now been convicted in three separate trials, most recently in a case this June in Abu Dhabi. Senate investigators initially thought the $32 million payment was hush money, and senior bank officials blamed him as the sole cause of the treasury losses. But in an interview with London's *Financial Times* shortly after his first prison term, Akbar stoutly denied that he had sole authority to make trades. Some orders came right from Abedi, he said. He called the bribe story "absolute rubbish."

Capcom became a clearing member of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange in October 1985 and also joined the Board of Trade and the National Futures Association, the trade group that polices the industry. The Merc expelled Capcom in October 1989 and fined it $500,000 for "the misuse of its facilities." In a 1987 audit, the Board of Trade criticized Capcom's London dealings with Refco and M.G. Partners, a Refco affiliate. The auditors said that a series of transactions, all with Refco, constituted trades when the Chicago markets were closed, a violation of exchange rules.

BCCI investigators are currently puzzling over another series of transactions involving Akbar. In addition to his role at the treasury department, he ran the bank's Grand Cayman branch. These Caribbean duties made more sense than it might seem, according to investigative writers Peter Truell and Larry Gurwin in their BCCI book *False Profits*; treasury operations were run out of the BCCI's Cayman Islands holding company and some of the most sensitive clients' accounts were located there. In 1988, a Cayman Islands outfit called the Gulf Union Bank began placing massive options orders with Refco, up to 6,000 option trades at a time. "That's a hell of a volume," said Christopher Byron, the investigative journalist who discovered it. A principal at the bank was related to the manager of the crucial BCCI affiliate called ICIC, also based in the Caymans. A bank reporter for the Caymans' main newspaper relays a rumor that the bank was owned by the Gokal family, Pakistani shippers intimately involved with the BCCI. In a suggestive coincidence, the Gokals' own commodity traders, Tradigrain, S.A., of Geneva, opened a Refco account in 1988. Probers are now asking whether this huge transfer from the Caymans was part of a last-minute looting of the BCCI.

The Clintons and the Risk-Takers

These murky global currents, apparently so remote from the Clintons, are looking more important in retrospect. Every new revelation suggests a deeper pattern of relationships than anyone had previously expected. The repeated appear-

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ance of the BCCI and its assorted fronts suggests that even now we underestimate Abedi's ambitions for penetrating the American economy. Through Capcom and Refco, his agents had become players in the Chicago Merc, which was then on its own way to becoming a major factor in global finance. Through its connections with major figures in the cable industry, Capcom and BCCI were apparently establishing a beachhead in American broadcasting. (The hand of the BCCI has been suspected in a minority investment these businessmen made in Ted Turner's Cable News Network.) While resisting the temptation of conspiratorial fantasies, one has to say there is a story here that hasn't yet been told.

At the time, however, Bill and Hillary very likely had almost no inkling about their benefactors' extensive connections. Everyone concerned is now trying to minimize their importance. The closest Clinton link to BCCI, Jackson Stephens, maintains that he was an entirely unwitting tool and only for a short time. BCCI prosecutors will agree that Stephens probably never met Darwaish or any other of the nominee shareholders in the takeover that created First American Bankshares. As the stockbroker who arranged to buy these shares, he acted for the account of a dissident faction of the bank's board (which included himself) in an attempt to oust its management. He reacts vehemently to attempts to connect him to the later scandals, and his lawyers have even sent vaguely threatening letters to the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, which has harped on the theme.

The connection with Refco entangled the Clintons, however remotely, in another segment of the web of influence-buying that was then being spun across the world by the Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

Yet the interconnections continue to multiply. Stephens Inc., the family brokerage considered one of the largest outside Wall Street, maintained links with Refco throughout the 1980s. In 1980, it cleared futures contracts through Conti Commodities, the international futures trader for Continental Grain Company; Conti was subsequently purchased by Refco. In 1981, Stephens Inc. opened an account with Refco itself, a relation renewed several times in the 1980s. When Hillary was trading with Refco, she also opened a commodities account at Stephens Inc. Yet the Stephens name has not otherwise figured in press accounts.

The dimensions of all these connections have been consistently underestimated in current reporting. Hillary may have been a very small fish in Refco's fish fry, but it now looks as if she benefited from a massive, and successful, scheme to manipulate the futures market.

Dittmer's Cattle Stampede

In 1979, widespread complaints about abnormal futures trading in cattle reached Rep. Neal Smith (D-Iowa), chairman of the House Small Business Committee, and he asked staff economist John W. Helmuth, a former commodities trader, to look into it. Helmuth, now at Iowa State University, recounts that the committee subpoenaed trading records and started running a series of statistical tests. To his surprise, he found a trading technique that predicted temporary price drops in the 1978-79 cattle futures market with 100 percent accuracy. When the price of feeding cattle at the large mid-western feedlots would reach a break-even point, the futures price would drop.

Helmuth identified an interlocking group of 32 traders—out of the 1,027 in the cattle futures market—who were using the technique to determine their trading. Over the period studied, all traders made a net profit of about $156 million. But these 32 captured $110 million of that total. In other words, 3 percent of the large traders made 70 percent of the profits. To Helmuth, the arrangement raised the possibility of joint trading, price manipulations, and speculative limits violations. He called for a CFTC investigation. At the time, the CFTC wasn't interested. Neither the Small Business Committee nor the CFTC will release the names of these 32 traders, since the confidentiality of these records is protected by law. But it's clear that Dittmer wasn't among the 995 losers.

(Three years later, the CFTC settled a suit against Refco and Dittmer with a $525,000 fine, its largest civil penalty to that date. The regulators charged Refco with violating speculative limits on cotton and grain contracts. Dittmer was personally assessed $150,000 of the penalty and suspended from cotton-futures trading for 120 days. At the end of 1979, the Merc itself fined Refco $250,000 and suspended Dittmer for six months. A Merc spokesman wouldn't specify the violations, but said the size of the fine "speaks for itself.")

Hillary seems to have been a hanger-on taking scraps of advice from the real insiders. Only one of her live cattle trades in the records released by the White House remotely matches the signal dates in Helmuth's study. The performance of her friend and adviser James Blair raises another set of questions about both of them, however. The complaints in Blair's suit against Dittmer and Refco paint the picture of a minor participant in a vast, long-term attempt to manipulate the market.

Blair doesn't appear as a major figure, possibly not even one of the 32. His complaint, which misspells Dittmer's name as "Ditmar," shows only a slim acquaintance with the Refco head, although Blair alludes to Dittmer's physical presence in Springdale during part of the trading. But in accusing Dittmer of manipulating the Merc's live cattle futures, he admits in effect that he was a disappointed participant. In April 1979, Blair charged, Dittmer and Refco passed on word that Dittmer would take delivery of cattle as

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contracts expired, thus keeping them from the exchange and propping up prices. Instead, said Blair, Dittmer arranged the deliveries. April 12, 1979, is one of Helmuth's signal dates for short selling, producing a one-day drop of 46 cents in the August 1979 contract. (Hillary herself sold short on April 30, making $12,900.)

But Blair's real problems began in June 1979, as the cattle market began to break. The Springdale office again passed the word that Dittmer would be taking all of his June live fat cattle deliveries, thus supporting the price, so that his customers should close their short positions and go long, betting on a continued price run-up. Instead, charged Blair, Dittmer "took such market action as to cause the market to plunge." In August, said Blair, Dittmer whipsawed his clients in the other direction. Knowing they were betting short, he did take deliveries of cattle, "in order to 'squeeze' the short positions." In October, in a final insult to his still believing customers, Dittmer and his salesmen talked them into going long immediately, holding their options until they "went off the board." That done, said Blair, Dittmer began selling his own contracts and became a massive seller up to the fifteenth, when Blair filed his suit. October 2, the date of Dittmer's massive selling, was the biggest signal day in Helmuth's study. Prices dropped by $2.65 and more in two futures contracts, the largest break in the survey, and the actual market price of choice steers continued to fall sharply over the next week.

The trouble with these deals, Sheikh Zayed's lawyers later charged, was that Darwaish and his allies were in the habit of allocating the profits from winning trades to their personal accounts, and charging the losses to Abu Dhabi.

By that time, however, Hillary was out of the cattle market and closing out her account with Refco. From October to May 1980, she traded in assorted commodities with Stephens Inc., with much smaller returns. Her departure from Refco was very likely influenced by Blair's sorry experience in June. But she left with a confusing flourish. After losing more than $26,000 in June, she did her most aggressive trading in July, apparently going both short and long on separate blocks of fifty cattle contracts, her largest position yet. (It's hard to reconcile the White House summaries of her trades with the monthly statements from Refco.) After grossing more than $54,000 in one week, her biggest win ever, she abandoned the cattle futures market forever.

In a study distributed by the White House press office, Leo Melamed, the former Merc chairman, exonerated Hillary of wrongdoing in these trades, but he chose rather narrow grounds. In some of her trades, he said, she may have not had enough cash in the account to meet margin requirements (i.e., to justify the credit that the broker extended in making the trades). But, he said,

> Being undermargined is not a violation of the customer involved but rather a violation of the firm where the customer's account is held. And in fact, her trading firm, without admitting or denying the violations, was substantially fined by the Chicago Mercantile Exchange in 1979 for margin violations, as well as other alleged infractions of Exchange rules.

Melamed issued a second statement at the end of May, based on the Merc trade register, and made an interesting qualification. Most of Hillary's trades, he said, were overnight trades, where she took the risk the market would change against her, rather than day trades, which are easier for brokers to manipulate. The one exception, he admitted, was her final trade in July 1979, where she made her last killing. Refco handled both sides of this trade, and the surviving records fail to identify the broker who took the order. "Due to the passage of time," said Melamed, "it is impossible to ascertain with certainty the specific cause of the variances involved."

Market professionals say they almost never see behavior like Hillary's last-minute killing and sudden exit, but it will take a lot more information to understand what was truly going on. Why, for instance, did she do so well on the market break in July when other Refco clients were beginning to feel very unhappy? Were any of her trades matched with other parties with an interest in buying the favor of a governor's wife? What was her connection to the Group of 32 identified by Helmuth? And who were these 32, other than Refco and Dittmer?

Beyond these questions is the very urgent matter of the BCCI investigations. At this writing, the U.S. Justice Department and Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau are debating how to handle the biggest BCCI figure yet to come to justice in the U.S. (Abedi himself, now an invalid in Pakistan, was recently convicted in absentia in an Abu Dhabi court and sentenced to eight years. But no one expects that the Pakistani government will deliver him to the justice of Sheikh Zayed.) In a deal in May, Abu Dhabi turned over Swaleh Naqvi, Abedi's number two man, to American custody. Since then he has been in the hands of the federal government, which is negotiating a plea bargain, while D.A. Morgenthau's more aggressive investigators make no secret of their frustration at his lack of cooperation. Does the Clinton administration really have the heart to press Naqvi for all of the BCCI's secrets? The saga of Capcom and Refco suggests that the embarrassment could start in its own back yard.

Refco and the BCCI are worth studying in their own right. But to the extent that their doings touch the current occupants of the White House, they become matters of even greater urgency. In the meantime, it would be a good idea to keep the economic initiatives of the president on a very tight leash. ❐

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Double Immunity

by Jeremy A. Rabkin

Some people mellow with age. In the riper wisdom of their later years, they adopt softer views than they did amidst the passionate controversies of their youth. Perhaps that is the explanation.

First, Paula Jones, former public employee in Arkansas, launched her suit against President Clinton, claiming that he had sexually harassed her as governor. Clinton then hired an extremely resourceful private attorney, Robert Bennett, to conduct his defense. Soon thereafter, Bennett began floating the argument that a sitting president has an absolute immunity from civil suits. It was an extremely far-fetched notion, as sitting congressmen, senators, federal judges, cabinet secretaries, and state governors have all been held liable to civil suits, without being able to claim any such sweeping immunity. But Bennett will ultimately be paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for his services. He can hardly be faulted for offering up such a legal theory, which, however implausible, does have the merit of distracting public attention and delaying a trial on the merits of Jones's lurid charges.

White House counsel Lloyd Cutler evidently could not bring himself to endorse the Bennett doctrine, so he offered up an alternative on behalf of his new employer. In public appearances at the end of May, Cutler urged that the Constitution should at least be read as assuring an incumbent president an automatic postponement of civil proceedings against him, until his departure from office. As nothing of the sort is done for other high federal officials, this claim did not seem especially persuasive, either. After indicating that he had asked the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel to research this claim, Cutler subsequently explained that OLC would be delivering "materials" but no formal opinion, suggesting that even President Clinton's own appointees in the Justice Department were reluctant to go on record in support of Cutler's claim. A number of prominent legal scholars expressed great skepticism about the claim and, with one exception, no scholars of any real stature came forward to endorse it.

But then there is the case of Professor Laurence Tribe of the Harvard Law School. Tribe repeatedly made himself available to television interviewers in May and June to offer unequivocal support for the claim that the Constitution requires judges to postpone the trial of almost any civil suit against a sitting president until the end of his term of office. Tribe acknowledged that the Constitution might, after all, allow for a prompt hearing in a particularly urgent suit. But he was emphatic that the case of Paula Jones was not a case that needed to be heard while President Clinton remained in office. The president was entitled to demand this, Tribe insisted, "in light of the special role of the Commander in Chief."

The notion that the president would be dangerously distracted, demeaned, or debilitated by involvement in a lawsuit is certainly not a new one. Both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson argued on this basis that the president could not be subject to any judicial process, even to criminal prosecution, while remaining in office. And as late as 1977, in the first edition of his treatise *American Constitutional Law*, Tribe himself held that "the sounder view would seem to be that a President cannot be criminally tried prior to impeachment and removal."

By 1988, however, when he published a second edition of his treatise, Tribe had substantially reversed himself. He now declared that "the burden is on those who insist that a President is immune from criminal trial prior to impeachment and removal from office." The second edition cited no new judicial rulings nor any new commentary nor any new material of any kind to support this opposite presumption.

But (perhaps coincidentally) the Congress of the United States had in the meantime given dramatic endorsement to the presumption reflected in Tribe's second edition. In the 1978 Ethics in Government Act, Congress directed the attorney general to seek the appointment of a special prosecutor, whenever there was "information sufficient to constitute grounds to investigate" possi-

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ble violations of federal criminal law by particular executive officials. At the head of the list of these officials, the act placed "the President and Vice President." The law did allow an exception for a mere "petty offense," which Congress subsequently defined as "a class B or C misdemeanor."

Class A misdemeanors in the federal code—for which Congress still demanded cranking up the machinery for a full criminal trial of the President of the United States—include such offenses as failing to open a draw bridge to allow the passage of waiting boats (based on a law of 1894). Some of these minor offenses might well be imputed to an incumbent president who had active business dealings before his election. The federal code also makes it a Class A misdemeanor, for example, to provide "misleading" information to the government on "the quantity of peanuts and peanut oil received" by a "warehouseman, sheller, crusher, salter or manufacturer of peanut products" (based on a 1936 law). The latter charge may have been one considered against President Jimmy Carter, a former peanut "warehouseman," who was subjected to an investigation by a special prosecutor during his time in the White House. The investigation of Carter, involving his Georgia peanut business, ultimately turned up no clear evidence of wrongdoing. But another president might not be so lucky.

The framers of the Constitution may have been astounded at the possibility that a President of the United States could be charged, tried, perhaps even sentenced to a prison term (up to a year for Class A misdemeanors) without Congress even taking the first steps toward an impeachment proceeding. But if Laurence Tribe thought this in any way unseemly, he did not bother to express his misgivings in the second edition of his treatise. He said not a word about the awkwardness of putting a sitting president on trial, even for relatively minor offenses, while expecting the president to carry on "the special role of the commander-in-chief."

On the contrary, Tribe insisted that presidents ought to be held accountable even to civil suits. Merely subjecting erring presidents to political repudiation would be insufficient, he argued, because this "confers no compensation on those they have injured" and "the electorate may choose not to punish officeholders who commit offenses against groups or persons disfavored by a majority of the electorate itself."

Tribe had a problem in urging open season for civil suits against the president, however. In its 1982 ruling in *Nixon* v. *Fitzgerald*, the Supreme Court had already held that the president does have an absolute immunity to civil suits claiming personal harm from a lawless presidential action. Fitzgerald, the plaintiff, had been removed from his position in the Pentagon following his testimony to a congressional committee about waste and abuse in weapons procurement. He claimed that in ordering his removal, President Nixon had deprived him of his First Amendment rights.

The court's ruling was very controversial at the time. While the Justice Department endorsed the claim of absolute presidential immunity, all other amicus briefs insisted that the president was only entitled to a "qualified immunity" for actions he had reasonably supposed to be lawful when taken. Among the amicus briefs was one submitted by several members of Congress, including then Rep. Albert Gore, Jr., insisting that such "qualified immunity provides ample safeguards for the effectiveness of the Presidency." Only a bare majority of the Supreme Court endorsed the claim of absolute immunity and the four dissenters protested that such sweeping immunity "places the President above the law." Comments in major law reviews at the time almost uniformly sided with dissenters.

Tribe offered a different interpretation. Alone among prominent commentators at the time, he interpreted the court's ruling in *Nixon* to mean simply that the court was unwilling to allow suits against the president on such a vague constitutional claim (deprivation of First Amendment rights) without explicit and direct authorization from Congress. He was extremely eager to portray the decision in *Nixon* as still leaving open the possibility that Congress could impose presidential liability for civil suits if it chose to do so. "Thus understood," Tribe opined in the second edition of his treatise, "the Court's holding in *Nixon* v. *Fitzgerald* warrants little alarm"—clearly implying that an immovable barrier to civil suits against the president would indeed warrant substantial alarm.

Tribe then consoled himself with the observation that "even if it could not be modified by Congress, the presidential immunity recognized by the Court . . . extends only to acts that are within the 'outer perimeter' of presidential responsibility." In other words, the president would still be vulnerable to civil suits for wrongful actions taken in his private or non-official capacity—which would, of course, include actions taken by a president before his election to the office. Tribe offered not the slightest hint that such suits would have to be delayed until the president left office. The claim that the Constitution actually requires such postponement is entirely a new one for Tribe.

In the preface to the second edition of his treatise, Tribe scoffed at the notion that he was inspired by political ambition. "If I shared the belief . . . that the sorts of constitutional arguments I advance are but a cover for whatever political views I might hold, I would . . . have found other uses for my energy." A cynic might suspect that Tribe has indeed found other uses for his "energy."

In the early spring of 1993, the *Harvard Crimson* reported that Laurence Tribe was being closely considered by the Clinton administration for the post of solicitor general in the Justice Department, a position often viewed as a stepping stone to the Supreme Court. The *Crimson* reported in this connection (evidently on the basis of information supplied by Tribe himself) that both Tribe and his wife had made early and generous financial contributions to the Clinton presidential campaign. Tribe did not get the appointment, however. Our cynic might speculate that Tribe has been appearing on television in recent weeks, urging a new view of presidential prerogatives, in order to send the Clintons a clearer message of devotion than that conveyed in the low visibility forum of the Harvard student newspaper.

But such speculation would be ungenerous. It is more charitable to think that Tribe has developed broader views in the years since the second edition of his treatise appeared. As George Bush can testify, 1988 was a long time ago. ❐

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The Hoagland Affair

by John Corry

Until her death last year, Marion Magid was the managing editor of *Commentary* magazine, and though we never met, I knew about her in the way that journalists and writers in New York know about others in the trade who share their general interests. Magid once wrote thoughtful essays about contemporary culture, and was blessed by good taste and high intelligence, two qualities not always joined. More important, many people seemed to love her, and she was known for the kindness she showed to forlorn writers and other waifs who so often trekked through her life. Consequently, I am sure she deserves a better memorial than the one she receives in an *Esquire* article by Edward Hoagland. He writes about the affairs he had while he and Magid were married.

Hoagland, an author of repute, has been known until now mostly for his essays and ruminations on the wilderness and its fauna. In *Esquire*, however, he confesses that he often shared his outdoor adventures with women other than Magid, whom he married in 1968 and was divorced from the same year she died. His tone is at once elegiac, boastful, and patronizing, and while he insists he was always full of love for Magid, he tells us things about her we have no business knowing—that she had trouble reaching an orgasm, for example—and really do not want to hear. On the other hand, whether, or how, he loved Magid is incidental. Mostly he wants us to know that it was political fastidiousness that led to his carrying on with a succession of Daisy Maes in the boondocks. His article—"Sex and the Married Man," it says on the *Esquire* cover—is another skirmish in the cultural wars.

Hoagland is clear about what happened. His marital difficulties began, he writes, the same year he was married. Magid took him to *Commentary* parties, and he met some awful people. Years later, it is all still fresh in his mind:

> Neoconservatism was an embryo at these soirees, and an Israeli visitor might stand up before our seated group and describe with visible relish how abjectly a Palestinian prisoner would break under the beatings administered off-street in a police van. Vietnam was an additional issue.

> Marion and I had our first fights over the invasion of Cambodia by American troops, because, for her, toughness in Southeast Asia seemed to translate into future support for Israel in the Middle East. . . . I began to think that neoconservatism, as spearheaded by *Commentary* in championing the South Vietnamese regime, the Argentinian junta, the Salvadoran dictatorship, was warping our foreign policy away from a Jeffersonian involvement with the Third World, and that her interest had shifted from Isaac Bashevis Singer to Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. From this point on, we felt an undertow in our marriage.

A few years later, Hoagland met his first Daisy Mae. ("At last, down in Texas, I fell in love.") The relationship ended when her husband came looking for him with a gun. Other women, however, soon followed, many of them, apparently, from out of state. The people his wife forced him to hang out with in New York—pushy Jews, obviously, even if Hoagland does not exactly identify them that way—were a pretty obnoxious bunch. They thought that "Palestinians weren't quite human beings." Moreover, they disparaged Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gandhi. Eventually the nastiness became too much for the author to bear. He recalls when he decided enough was enough:

> I remember a specific moment when it registered on me that I was traveling with the wrong crowd. We were driving to the Upper East Side with a man

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John Corry is The American Spectator*'s regular Presswatch columnist and author of the new book,* My Times: Adventures in the News Trade *(Grosset/G.P. Putnam's Sons).*

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who, with his deep tan and good car, had done pretty well, like so many of her friends, riding the neocon wave. We were passing the Martinique Hotel, a welfare dumping ground at Thirty-second Street whose haggard beggars this lunchtime had spilled over the curb at the stoplight. They weren't blacks on this particular day, so the crux was poverty, not race. They were Appalachian-looking whites—bony, vitamin-starved, despairing kids of ten or twelve with faces out of Walker Evans or Dorothea Lange, the product of some social cataclysm in coal country. This man's father, if I recall, had had a horse and wagon hauling junk in Winnipeg fifty years ago, but when these hungry-looking, country-looking children asked for change for groceries at his window, he was exasperated, rolling it up—that he hadn't clear sailing all the way uptown. It was of a piece with the neocon idea that the problem of homelessness was being exaggerated by liberals, and I made up my mind that I had better cut and run.

And so he did, although not before falling in love again, this time with a nurse in Alaska "much younger and more politically radical than me." When he finally left Magid, Hoagland writes, his friends wondered why he had not done it sooner. He had been putting up with so much for so long that they thought he just liked being unhappy. We do not know, of course, what Magid thought.

Granted that there is nothing new about a middle-aged writer describing his sexual awakening, but the *Esquire* article does break new ground. Politics and marital break-ups have been joined in imaginative ways. Infidelity becomes an appropriate response when your wife's friends decry the Palestinian Intifada (which, in a loopy historical parallel, Hoagland compares to the Tet Offensive); and when you see, or imagine you see, some coal-miner's kids outside the Martinique, you know you must get a divorce. A sensitive liberal mentality can be pure hell on a marriage.

The mentality, however, is growing, particularly as it touches on women. Gloria Steinem once declared that Jeane Kirkpatrick was only masquerading as a woman, and in reality was one of "them," meaning the males in the Reagan White House, even though by all ancient standards, Kirkpatrick, happily married and the mother of children, was much more of a woman than Steinem. The founder of *Ms.* magazine was being spiteful, but there was craftiness in her attack. The idea that womanliness and political convictions are entwined has become encapsulated in media thinking. A woman without the proper convictions is not a real women, and reporters may invade her privacy and write about her as they please. There is a direct line between Steinem insulting Kirkpatrick, and the *Esquire* editors publishing revelations about Magid. There is linkage, too, with how the press treats Paula Jones. The woman who brought a sexual-harassment suit against Bill Clinton is being portrayed as a Snopes family cousin, who grew up on the set of "Hee Haw."

Here, for instance, is Evan Thomas, *Newsweek*'s Washington bureau chief, describing Jones with elegant contempt on "Inside Washington." She is, he says, "some sleazy woman with big hair coming out of the trailer parks—I think she's a dubious witness, I really do."

And here is Margaret Carlson, the *Time* magazine columnist, exercising the same disdain on CNN's "Capital Gang." Jones, she declares, is "someone without a job, from Arkansas, whose lawyer says she's not in it for money, but clearly she's in it for something—fame, celebrity, money, something."

Big hair, trailer parks, and clearly she's in it for something. Prominent journalists, upper-middle class and rising, know poor white trash when they see it, and poor white trash are not a protected minority, except when they turn up at the Martinique. One *Newsweek* story said that if Clinton's attorney wanted to discredit Jones he "need look no further" than her brother-in-law. *Newsweek* then quoted him gleefully: "Promiscuity? Good gosh. Her mother is fixing to get the shock of her life when Paula's life comes out. . . . She went out and had herself a good time. I've seen her at the Red Lobster pinch men on the ass."

And here is the breathless lead para-

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graph on a long story in *U.S. News & World Report*:

> Above all else, she wanted to get out. Paula Corbin Jones had no use for the rusty trailers and decaying storefronts of Lonoke, Ark., for her Bible-toting mother or the snotty rich kids at the high school or the endless procession of admiring farm boys whose life ambition was a hitch in the Army and a job at the Conoco station off Interstate 40. Even as a teenager, Jones shunned the nearby Wal-Mart for the upscale Dillard's department store and preferred name labels like Nike and Calvin Klein. In time, she fell in love with a man who bought her a Gucci bag and a Mercedes.

None of this is flattering to Jones; none of it is meant to be flattering, either. Young reporters in Washington identify with Bill and Hillary; they would like to be like them. No one wants to be a Paula. Paula is a visitor from another planet, and she shares nothing with the journalists who write and talk about her except the preference for name labels like Nike and Calvin Klein. But the unblinking fact is that if the journalists portray anything accurately about her at all, it is that she exudes an unsophisticated sexuality that would lead a randy young governor to misread her. A pinch on the ass at the Red Lobster would suggest promiscuity to him, too. As one of the state troopers said, Clinton thought she had a "come-hither look." Given what we know about the man, he probably busted his braces.

Precisely what happened that day at the Hotel Excelsior, though, will never be established beyond the shadow of all doubt. The door to the hotel suite was closed. Nonetheless, it is dead certain something happened, and that Jones is more believable than Clinton. She may have big hair, but she also has six affidavits. Columnists and other feminists have been having a hard time with that, although a fractured party line has been emerging: Feminists do not have to believe everything other women say (Ellen Goodman); it is all a right-wing plot (Eleanor Smeal and others too numerous to mention); and Paula Jones does not have anywhere near the credibility of Anita Hill (Anna Quindlen, most notably).

Quindlen argued in the *New York Times* that because Jones waited so long to make her accusations—the disputed afternoon at the Excelsior was all of three years ago—she could not be telling the truth now. Quindlen neglected to mention, however, that Hill waited ten years before she made her charges against Clarence Thomas. This was too much for Katha Pollitt, a feminist herself, who wrote in the *Nation* that while Quindlen's column was "no doubt, enshrined on refrigerator doors nationwide," Jones, in many ways, had made a far stronger case for sexual harassment than had Hill. So far, few other journalists seem to agree with Pollitt, though, and given that sensitive mentality, it is unlikely that many will. ❐

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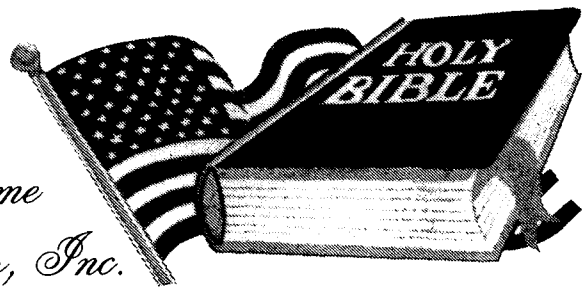

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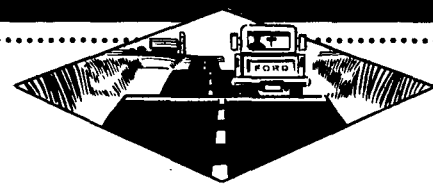

Future Limits

by Terry Eastland

In early June, the ambitiously named Project for the Republican Future sponsored the first of several conferences about the direction of GOP politics and policies in the 1990s. "Is empowerment the right GOP strategy for the 1990s?" was the question put to the three panelists—former congressman Vin Weber, former OMB director Richard Darman, and Jeffrey Bell, long-time party activist and author of *Populism and Elitism* (1992). Their opening remarks concluded, the PRF chairman William Kristol bravely asked them what they thought of trying to revive "the most traditional Republican principle of all"—that of limited government, for which, he averred, there might be more public support today than when Ronald Reagan was elected president. "Am I wrong," he asked, "to put great hopes in *relimiting* government as a Republican alternative to the Clinton administration's reinventing government?"

Weber told Kristol he was wrong, because a politics aimed at relimiting government won't work. The public today is different, he agreed, but not in the way Kristol supposes. Echoing the conventional wisdom about the 1992 election, Weber said there is "a demand for government activism that didn't exist at the beginning of the Reagan administration. . . . People are asking the government for help." To compete with Democrats, Weber said, Republicans will have to "discover a principled response." By that he means one that uses government to empower people but is no longer preoccupied with trying to limit, or relimit, government. Darman, as might be expected, also told Kristol he was wrong. "You need an exciting vision to be exciting politically, and just being for limited government isn't such an exciting vision. You have to be able to show that you can address the basic problems that people think relevant. This will require a governmental role." Only Bell seemed to think Kristol might be right, but his answer was limp. "If things keep going down the path they are now, we can do a lot more in this direction." Kristol told me later, "I was a little surprised that none of the panelists seemed particularly taken by the idea."

In his penetrating new book, *Dead Right*, David Frum, late of *Forbes*, explains why. Conservatives, he writes, "have wearily concluded that reducing [big government] is hopeless, and that even the task of preventing its further growth will probably exceed their strength." *Dead Right* is basically an argument that notwithstanding Reagan's many achievements, he also managed to kill off a central tenet of modern conservatism—rejection of big government. Frum spares few on the right for their acquiescence to big government: Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, Ed Meese, even Pat Buchanan, even the Heritage Foundation.

Not every conservative has made peace with big government. Texan Phil Gramm is one belligerent, Texan Dick Armey another. When I asked Gramm how he would have answered Kristol's question, the senator delivered this stemwinder: "If our experience of the last ten years in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and in the Third World is any indicator," he said, "the movement toward limited government is the most powerful force that exists on the planet. We have the incredible paradox in America that we are the only country in the world that is trying to get into socialized medicine rather than trying to get out of it. . . . If the Republican Party doesn't stand for individual freedom and limited government, I don't know what it stands for."

Despite his support for the mohair subsidy (mohair sheep graze in Texas) and for the 1990 Bush-Darman tax increase, Gramm's anti-government growth credentials are solid. As he likes to point out, the second half of the 1980s saw the size of the federal government relative to the economy shrink for the first time since World War II. It shrunk in large part thanks to the 1985 Gramm-Rudman law, which imposed stringent limits on federal spending. Unfortunately, the law was eliminated by Darman's budget deal of 1990.

Gramm and Armey are among the very few Republican politicians willing to speak openly about reducing government. "You can't justify a third of it," Gramm says when asked how much of the federal government he'd cut. Armey, with his skinflint voting record, would cut it by a quarter, and "a clear place to start is the Education Department." The party's "basic thrust" should be that "government's too big, spends too much, and is too involved in our lives." Armey reads the electorate—or at least his electorate—differently from Weber. "Back home," he says, "I'm the moderate trying to stop a march on Washington." Like Kristol, Armey foresees a popular revolt against big government.

Their vision may elude most folks. Certain aspects of the welfare state are popular with conservative voters, and not even Gramm and Armey are willing to touch Social Security, the proverbial third rail of American politics. If smaller government is to become a reality, politicians, and the academics and journalists who shape public opinion, will have to go out on a limb for it. George Will, once an advocate of a conservative welfare state, has in recent years performed a notable about-face. "I am much less sanguine about the capacities of the welfare state," he told me, although he disagrees with those who think it will require a major shock to the body politic (a debt crisis, say) to put the idea of limited government into serious play. "The good news about

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America today is the sudden expansion of the discussible." Will has a point. Charles Murray endorses abolishing welfare and other social programs linked to family breakup—and that heretofore undiscussible idea is suddenly being debated.

What policies might be proposed to limit government? Much depends on what is meant by "limited government." One definition is government that continues to grow, but at a slower rate than liberals would like. That's a dime-less approach that won't inspire anyone. Another definition is government that doesn't grow in real terms. Such a buck-stops-here policy can be fleshed out in various ways: Armey's just-introduced Freedom and Fairness Restoration Act seeks to reduce government's share of GDP through spending caps and "sunset provisions" for early retirements. Frum writes that if federal non-defense spending had risen no faster than inflation between 1979 and 1989, the government share of GDP in 1989 would have been 17 percent, not the 22 percent it was. These five percentage points of GDP would have eliminated the 1989 deficit, which consumed three points of GDP, and allowed doing away with the corporate income tax or slashing everyone's Social Security taxes.

Another form of limited government is one forced to operate under more constraints than the Constitution now imposes. Since this would require amending the Constitution—among the most arduous political tasks—it might seem politically unrealistic. But with a shift of just a few congressional votes, a genuine balanced budget amendment could be sent to the states for ratification. The understanding behind such an amendment would be that the old Article I constraints on congressional spending have all but eroded, so that Congress is free to spend on virtually anything. There's no going back to the doctrine of enumerated powers exercised by congressional majorities, but an appropriately framed amendment could require supermajorities—say, two-thirds of the membership of both houses—to make important decisions affecting the public fisc. Such a rule would limit the way Congress spends money, although it's unclear whether and how it would affect the size of government.

There is, of course, a final definition of limited government—the kind of government that predated the New Deal and most of the welfare state. Shorn of Social Security and entitlements like Medicare, government would indeed become much smaller relative to GDP—and much less intrusive, as federal regulations would be few and far between. This is the definition embraced by Frum, and it proceeds not just from a conviction that the welfare state is "a desperately unstable institution" bound to ignite "terrible resentment" (see Perot) but also from a belief that the old conservatism was right. "It's not to maximize liberty as an end in itself that conservatives used to advocate minimal government," he writes. "They advocated it because they admired a certain type of character . . . that had been widespread in this country—self-reliant, competent, canny and uncomplaining—and minimal government was the system of government under which the character they admired flourished best." However quixotic the idea of minimal government may seem today, it is worth discussing, if only to expand the range of the discussible. ❐

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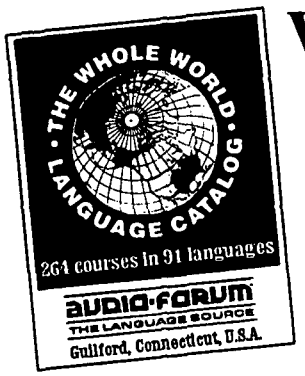

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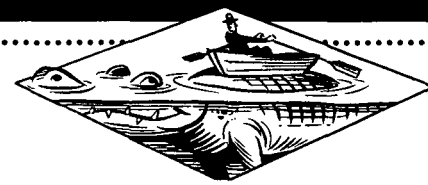

Neo-Italy

by Michael Ledeen

The Italian Revolution has reached its halfway point, having liquidated the old political parties and having made possible a radical transformation of the state. The men and institutions that governed Italy since the latter days of World War II have disappeared, or linger on as hated symbols of the *ancien régime*. The Christian Democratic Party, which had been part of every postwar government until last autumn, no longer exists (a rump has renamed itself and now searches for a political identity), and its two most powerful leaders—Giulio Andreotti and Arnaldo Forlani—await trial. Bettino Craxi, who was the dominant political personality of the past fifteen years, lives in exile in Tunis, knowing that the minute he sets foot on Italian soil his passport will be confiscated in preparation for his indictment. According to the latest figures, the purge has produced three suicides and more than two thousand prisoners.

As late as last winter, it was generally expected that the gravediggers of the old order would be its historic opponents: the Communist Party (now calling itself the Democratic Party of the Left, and led by the hapless Achille Occhetto, the former Communist general secretary). A few months before the March parliamentary elections, a left alliance had run well in local contests, capturing town halls from Turin to Rome and Naples. Occhetto took to behaving like a prime minister-in-waiting, granting interviews in tones of noblesse oblige, and even traveling to the City of London to reassure financiers about his intentions with regard to nationalization and taxation. Apparently no one had the bad manners to question the sincerity of Occhetto's conversion to ex-Communism.

Occhetto's coronation procession was rudely interrupted by Silvio Berlusconi, a real estate tycoon, media magnate, sports impresario, and former intimate of the unfortunate Craxi. Less than three months before the elections, Berlusconi announced the creation of a new conservative political movement, "Forza Italia," which is what fans yell when the national soccer team takes the field. He forged an electoral alliance with the Northern League (an anti-establishment and sometimes-separatist party from Milan, which had become the biggest party in the north) and the National Alliance (a newly crafted, more democratic version of the old neo-fascist party). Berlusconi's slogans were right out of the Reagan/Thatcher playbook: lower taxes and smaller government. His unlikely coalition won the elections, achieving a solid majority in the chamber, and falling barely short of one in the senate. Berlusconi was named prime minister, and put together a group of largely new faces (only two cabinet members had ever held ministerial rank), to match a two-thirds turnover in the legislature.

So shocking was Berlusconi's victory, and so profound its implications, that the other political players and the press reacted much as their counterparts had to the election of Reagan in America: Berlusconi and his allies were portrayed as lunatic extremists, and there were dark hints that something highly improper, and quite possibly criminal, had taken place.

The first charge was that Berlusconi—who owns three of the six national television networks—was a "media fascist" whose stations had brainwashed the public. There was a great hue and cry over the necessity to separate Berlusconi-the-politician from Berlusconi-the-media-magnate, otherwise he would rule forever thanks to a continuous indoctrination of the Italian people. This theory conveniently ignored the left's decades-long domination of the other three networks, as well as the abundance of other news media. Worse, it was a contemptuous caricature of the Italian people, who are not so easily fooled as that.

The Berlusconi victory was a logical development in the Italian Revolution, and the public recognized it a lot sooner than the elites. It will be recalled that the revolution was directed against a system of corruption known as "Tangentopoli" (Payoff City), which made the state—which is to say, the political parties—a partner in every major business deal. Prior to the fall of Communism, the Italian magistracy was loath to crack down on the corruption, for fear of turning the country over to the Communists (Italy's was the largest Communist Party in the Western world). But once the Soviet Empire had been shattered, the judges—backed by such explosive new political forces as the Northern League and an anti-mafia movement in Sicily—closed in on their targets. Rarely has a modern state experienced such a thorough purge of its ruling class. The ex-Communists presented themselves as the rightful successors to Tangentopoli, but the public was rather more inclined to view Occhetto & Co. as part of the problem. Had they not taken money—and lots of it—from the Soviet Union and its satellites? And were they not in on the take from Tangentopoli?

Berlusconi understood that most Italians did not want the most statist of the old parties to govern the country;

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they wanted to weaken the Rome government, not reinforce it. The League's Umberto Bossi—who had risen to power on the slogan "Get off our toes and let us work"—had been the expected beneficiary of that anti-government sentiment. But Bossi was abrasive and inconsistent, offending many potential supporters. Berlusconi offered the best of Bossi's anti-establishment passion, along with self-confidence and spontaneous charm. And, in sharp contrast to the tedious and evasive Occhetto, Berlusconi was straighforward and intelligent.

The second charge brought against the Berlusconi government was that it contained "fascist ministers," and was therefore antidemocratic. European leaders—mainly socialists—from Brussels to Athens announced they would not cooperate with the Italian "fascists," and, as if he hadn't enough to do, Israeli deputy foreign minister Yossi Beilin weighed in, announcing that his government was deeply disturbed. The usual American newspapers and journalists (the *New York Times*, Mary McGrory) echoed the warnings.

The main target of the "anti-fascist" campaign was National Alliance leader Gianfranco Fini, who was catapulted to prominence when he won an amazing 47 percent in Rome's mayoral elections. Fini has been unusually outspoken in explaining and repudiating his and his party's neo-fascist past. His opinion that Mussolini's fascism did not become evil until its passage of anti-Semitic laws in 1938 has been widely quoted. But in the same interview he also said:

> I continue to define myself as post-fascist. Because being an Italian, being of the right, being of the [neo-fascist party], it is proper that I give a judgment of fascism. And I did it, changing our movement into a post-fascist force . . . I believe that the break with the past consists in the acceptance of the values of liberty, democracy, and toleration.
>
> The other day in the chamber I said that totalitarianism is contemptible and deplorable. I said indeed that antifascism was an important moment for the return of democratic values, even if not all the antifascists were antitotalitarian. What more do you want?

It was a fair question. Throughout the campaign, Occhetto and his gang were invariably described as "ex-Communists," but Fini and his people were always called "neo-fascists." The accusations had more to do with the increasing desperation of the European left than with any resurgence of Italian fascism.

There are still some nostalgic supporters of *il Duce* in the National Alliance, and one should continue to challenge Fini on basic issues—like his enthusiasm for the role of the state. Berlusconi has surrounded himself with anti-statists: foreign minister Antonio Martino is a Chicago School economist and a former Heritage Foundation fellow; and senate president Carlo Scognamiglio is another Jeffersonian of long standing. But dismantling the overbuilt Italian welfare state will require extraordinary political will, and the first month of the new government was not encouraging. Bossi was threatening political alliances with Occhetto and others; Berlusconi lost key senate votes; and the courts issued a decision on pensions that promises to cost the treasury plenty.

The initial difficulties of the new regime transformed the European Parliament elections of June 12 into a national referendum on Berlusconi, and he emerged with more than 30.6 percent of the vote, a 10-percent leap from March. Forza Italia is now the number-one political party in every region of the country, far outdistancing the National Alliance in the south and the League in the north. More important, both Fini and Bossi lost votes, making it likely that the rational part of the League and the centrist bulk of Fini's movement will converge with Forza Italia—leaving the neo-fascist remnant out of the political orbit. The ex-Communists dropped another few points, and Chairman Occhetto, who has supervised the ruination of what was once a great Communist Party, resigned.

It's been a big year for Silvio Berlusconi: first the Italian elections, then the European soccer championship for his beloved Milan, then the Europarliament triumph. A thoroughly successful revolution in Italy is one of the most unlikely events in recent history, and yet, as an earlier Italian revolutionary once put it, lo, it moves. ❐

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Howe Rules!

by Benjamin J. Stein

Tuesday

Dinner with my pal Al "The Duke" Duesenberg. Al is a major casting guy, working out of both New York and Los Angeles. He's a lean, muscular fellow from Flushing, Queens. I would guess he's about 45. He has long hair, drives a powerful Yamaha motorcycle, and proudly calls himself an animal. I'm in his debt because he cast me in a movie where I had a lot of fun. He's at Morton's, but just to show what a rebel he is, he's wearing torn denim and a T-shirt.

"I don't like this, Duke," I said. "I asked out a woman to go to dinner, and I told her we'd go to a perfectly good place, a Chinese place called Joss, and she said she would only go to Morton's or the Ivy. Those are the two most expensive restaurants in town. I don't know, Duke. What do you think?"

The Duke has made the seduction and control of women his life's occupation. I have to wonder sometimes at his amazing stories of conquest and charm.

"Look," he said, "the rules are really simple. You're paying. You're asking her out. You decide. That's it. Not complicated. You tell her you want to get turkey sandwiches and eat on a bench, that's what she's got to do if she really likes you. If she likes you for where you take her or who she's going to see when she's with you, she's not for you. If she starts ordering you around, then it's no fun, and it's over. Just tell her, 'It's not fun if you order me around,' and that's that."

"Sound advice, Duke," I said. "It's just that the women in show business are so tough."

"No, they're not," he said. "If they're in the business at all, they're not tough. If they were tough, they'd be loading a barge in New Orleans. Now, here's what I do. I ask a girl out. I let her know right away I only want one thing. I let her know I don't have any money. If she's interested, great. If she's not, I go to the next one. It's a numbers game, pure and simple. You talk to enough of them, one of them goes for it. You talk to enough each day, there's one every day."

"Food for thought," I said.

"And remember, be who you are. If you start putting out a false act, they'll smell it a mile away, and they'll act on it, and then you're weak, and she's in charge, which is never what you want. If a girl calls and tries to say she wants to change a date, you tell her, 'Hey, I'm not a weatherman and I don't do rain checks.' If she even cancels once, I tell her that's it. She has a chance to change her mind, but if she's really canceling, no more Duke for her."

"That's going to be hard," I said, "because I cancel so many dates myself."

"Dummy," the Duke said. "It's okay for *you* to cancel. In fact, you *should* cancel. As much as possible. But the idea that she can cancel on you, that's crazy."

"I like this," I said.

"It's war, Ben," the Duke said. "You can decide whether you want to win or lose. But you have to know who you are. If you try to be who you're not, you'll never win."

As wacky as it sounded, Duke's advice also made a lot of sense. That makes me sad. In fact, it makes me really sad. "To live in this town, you must be tough, tough, tough, tough, tough, tough, tough."

Friday

Beautiful Dotty, my neighbor from Dixie, appeared at my door this afternoon to "borrow" a bottle of wine. "But it's only five o'clock," I said. "That's too early to start drinking."

"No, it isn't," she said. "It's afternoon. That's not too early."

I was filing as she walked around hounding me for the bottle of wine. Her moods and interests change on a whim, and suddenly she looked at herself in the mirror and said, "How come no man wants to marry me? A lot of men want my body, but no one wants to marry me. Why?"

"Because," I answered as I was brushing my teeth, "you're so

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beautiful that you're not for any one man. You belong to eternity—like what Edwin Stanton said about Abraham Lincoln when he died: 'Now he belongs to the ages.'"

Dotty looked at me intently. "'He belongs to his *agents*?'" she asked. "Do presidents have *agents*?"

"No, *ages*, Dotty, not *agents*," I said.

"It actually makes sense," she said. "They're acting all the time. Why shouldn't they have agents?"

Monday

This is more like it. I'm here on the set of a new sitcom, a pilot, called "Howe High." It's your typical high school in America, circa 1994. The stars are two young actors named David Lascher and Kevin Connally and two beautiful young actresses named Wendy Benson and Denise Richards. There's also a hilarious fellow named "Ant"—his real name (he had it legally changed)—who plays a gay high school student. Margaret Smith (but not Margaret Chase Smith) plays David Lascher's mother, and she too is a scream. There are about a hundred lesser players, including two shrewd actors named Jeremy Lawrence and Darrell Kunitomi and a spectacular beauty named Jessica Hahn—who flashes her legs and complains about sexism.

We're being directed by the unbelievably hard-working Gerry Cohen. He's also one of the producers, along with Ron Leavitt and Arthur Silver, who wrote the script. The trio is famous and rich from a little item called "Married With Children"—consistently the funniest show on TV.

I, your humble servant, play a teacher of history. I'm in three scenes, in which we lampoon the total laziness and self-justification of the modern student, and I love it all a lot. More than a lot, an obsessive, sick amount.

Here's how the first day of rehearsals works: You read the script. Then you get yourselves "blocked" by the director, who thinks up all kinds of camera angles that you or I would never concoct in a million years. We stand on the set and do the scenes over and over. While we wait for the director and the producers and the camera people to figure out their scenes, we laugh and joke with each other. There's no place else we'd rather be. We're like Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland times fifty, just all kicking, all dancing, all singing, all very happy to be here instead of in our homes waiting for the phone to ring or waiting tables or writing about leveraged buyouts or whatever people do when they're not acting.

We don't mind being ordered around and we don't mind being yelled at. We're just so happy to be in good company, so happy to be plying our self-obsessed craft, so happy to be in the limelight. Also, it seems to me that this show has a good chance of getting picked up and aired on a weekly basis. If that happened, I would be a regular player, the highest summit of man's aspirations.

After a few hours, we went to lunch at the Disney commissary. I sat with my fellow actors. We all talked about our agents and our managers (I don't happen to have a manager) and how many commercials we have done and how many were nationals. I thought I was a star of commercials but Kevin Connally told me he had done more than seventy before he was 18, all nationals. I'm impressed. Ant told some of his jokes, none of which I remembered, and then I went back to my little dressing room. There is nothing quite like sleeping on the set. It's like being in college, only better. That is, the central problem of middle age is loneliness, as far as I can tell. You spend all too much of your life working by yourself. Yes, you might have your Little Perfect to keep you company, but where are the pals you could just hang out with as soon as you walked out the door? They're all gone, but when you're on the set, they're back. You know that while you're sleeping, you can wake up at any time. You won't be lonely. You'll have someone to play with. Plus, that someone may well be a young, gorgeous starlet if you're working on "Howe High." Finally, you're getting paid, albeit modestly, even while you sleep. All in all, reasons for a sound nap.

Tuesday

Another fabulous day on the set. Years ago, I was given intravenous Demerol for the extraction of a tooth. I remember that I had no idea that anyone could ever feel so good, and hoped it would never end. This is very much what I feel like when I'm on the set.

When I got home I played with Little Perfect for a long time. The usual game is that I throw pillows at him. He makes up rules as we go along. The rules are such things as that it never counts if I hit him with a tossed pillow, but it always counts if he hits me with one. Just what it counts toward is unclear. What is clear is that he loves to make up rules that have the specific point of protecting him—and then calling them rules of general application.

Moreover, once I question the rules and point out the somewhat one-sided nature of their use, he always has an answer to make it seem as if the rule is good for me, too. For example, after a few minutes, he lay down on the bed on his stomach with only his back showing. He then said, "It only counts if you can hit me in the stomach with the pillow, Daddy."

"But how can I possibly do that" I asked, "when I can't even see your stomach because you're lying on it?"

"This is to teach you how to hit targets that are really hard to hit," he said. "It'll make you much better at the game."

Later, he made a rule that if I hit him on the hands while he was trying to kick

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the pillow away, that counted as points for him. He explained that it was to teach me how to throw at a low angle, below his hands, which would prove really useful to me later. Of course, when I did that, he made a rule that I couldn't get any points if I hit him below the knees.

This is exactly what law is all about. Law is a set of rules made by a group of people who have the power to make laws. Since they have the power, they make rules that protect their interests. Then they rationalize these rules as being good for everyone. It didn't fool Adam Smith, who said that law was always and everywhere intended to protect those who have property against those who didn't. Law is made to protect the lawmakers and their pals, and the reasons to fool the voters are made up later.

Friday

Taping day for "Howe High." The set is swarming with actors and extras. We've been rehearsing like mad, being ordered around like the dancers in *A Chorus Line*, getting yelled at, getting praised, getting high on the acting drug, feeling immortal. The buzz around this show is fantastic: it's got hit written all over it. So saith the producers, the writers, the director—everyone. We're stars.

My friend Staci visited during lunch. I spoke to her with even more than my usual empathy. Staci has recently been under surgery for thyroid cancer. In fact, she had her thyroid out about a month ago. "Yesterday, I had my first radiation treatment for this thing," she said. "They put your head in this thing like an incubator, and then you suck this atomic cocktail out of a straw except it's a tube. And it tastes just like water, but for about two hours later, you have this weird dragon breath so that you go around feeling like you're Superman. And they tell you you're so highly radioactive that you might hurt someone if you get too close to him. So for twenty-four hours, no kissing and no sleeping around. Naturally, the first thing I'm thinking about is this guy Keith I've been having such a hard time with. I think I'll just invite him over and then he won't have to worry about his name in lights."

What a girl.

Tuesday

I'm in Washington, D.C. I'm here to give a speech to some very smart people called the AIMR, investment experts in a big way. However, that's Thursday. Today, I'm having lunch with my father and his pals at the American Enterprise Institute, in their fabulous dining room. There's Murray Foss, Marvin Kosters, Alan Wallis, Ben Wattenberg, and my father. I love these guys. We're eating at "The Economists' Table" in the middle of the room. It's a round table, and the cooks and waiters call the men who eat here the Wild Bunch. That's a joke. But in fact, the people at the table are very witty. If they were English, someone would long since have made a show about them.

When I got back to my hotel room, after a glorious walk past Dupont Circle and the eastern fringes of Georgetown, I found a number of messages. One was from a guy in "Howe High." He's worried. He's heard rumors we're not going to get on the air. Another is from a friend in Northern California. She's sad because she's remembering her brother, who died not long after a mental hospital threw him out for not being quick enough about paying his bills. She was crying on the telephone. Another call from a woman who is having a baby as a single mother because she wants to carry on the family of her mother, who was a prisoner in Auschwitz for five years. She's worried about money. Another call from a friend in the phone sales business, Lev Davidovich Bronstein, who's also worried about money and thinks that his dog, an Afghan, may have run away. He loves that hound a real lot. The dog is young and frisky, though, and that's what you get for having such a young dog.

I ate dinner with me ol' Maw and Paw at the Cosmos Club. My parents, in their seventies, were among the youngest people in the room. Bob Tyrrell and a world champion swimmer—in the butterfly, no less—came over and sat with us. Wlady and Joanna were with us. It was a fun time. Maybe set life isn't the only possible life after all.

Wednesday

Dinner with an authentic Clintonite. She's a woman who is a Clinton White House appointee. I can't say any more than that. She's lively and fun, but she likes the Clintons too much for us to have a real long conversation. She does agree with me about certain personality traits about the First Lady, but overall, she's a loyal Clinton hand. I'll have to remember her when I'm thinking that they're all like Hillary. Some can see a little patch of blue truth out there.

It's funny. I liked the Clintonista, but she was a little tough for me. I like them as weak as I am.

Sunday

A new talk show on Channel 13. It's called "Premier Story." This day's episode is about Bill and Hillary. I'm on with Ann Lewis, former political director at the Democratic National Committee, and a writer at *Newsweek* named Jonathan Alter—a major pal of Bill and Hillary. When I said that the mainstream media had largely dropped the ball on the Clintons' misdeeds and were now mostly covering up, Alter went berserk. He insisted—in various insulting phrases—that I was an idiot and that *Newsweek* and the other mags were probably *over*covering the

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story. Lewis, who these days shills for the White House, naturally agreed.

The terrifying part is that I am certain that Alter believes what he says. The fact is that ideology is a constant and truth is a variable. Friends and political connections are a constant, and truth is a variable. Above all, money, the big boodle that comes from being pals with the president and the First Diva and de facto secretary of commerce is a constant, and truth is a variable.

Still, as I drove away from the show, I made a mental outline of what the Clintons have accomplished so far:

(1) Demolished U.S. foreign policy credibility by allowing us to be bullied and shamed by (a) petty Haitian gangsters; (b) war criminals in the former Yugoslavia; (c) certified butchers and lunatics in North Korea; (d) aging tyrants in Peking.

(2) Destroyed the incredibly costly arms superiority of the U.S. by ruthlessly cutting defense.

(3) Intentionally and eagerly sold and dispersed weapons technology to enemies and potential enemies.

(4) Attempted at every possible turn to stir up class warfare in the U.S. and to make poor people as angry and frustrated as possible without encouraging any constructive activity by them.

(5) Showed contempt for law and for the office of President by attempts to cover up for (a) looting a federally insured S&L (and maybe more than one); (b) accepting bribes in the forms of gifts of ownership in a real estate company and guaranteed no-lose fake commodities trades; (c) consorting with drug dealers and fraudulent bond traders; (d) abusing the income tax laws; (e) rampant sexual harassment; (f) obstructing justice in connection with the investigation of Vincent Foster's death.

Friday

Little Mr. Perfect has a very sweet and capable teacher named Marci. She's getting married this summer. In keeping with religious custom, at tonight's Sabbath services, Marci and her fiancé will be mentioned and then will have little kids throw candy at them. (I've just been reading that this is a Palestinian custom as well.) Anyway, as I walked into the synagogue, I noticed that there is a guard at the parking lot and another at the front door. There are elaborate gates and bars on the windows. When Tommy is getting into and out of school there are Israeli guards all around the pickup and dropoff areas.

I just read a story about skinheads in the Northwest (I think it was Portland) shooting at a synagogue with high-powered Chinese rifles.

The life of Jews in America is changing. When I was a child, no one would have even imagined a need for guards at our little synagogue in Chevy Chase, Maryland. If someone had shot at a synagogue it would have been a big story. Now, apparently, it's routine. This is not a good sign. When I was a child, Jews were not allowed in the eating clubs at Princeton or in the white-shoe law firms in Manhattan, but at least we felt no one would shoot at us. America is becoming frightening. I'm scared all the time when I'm in a car in

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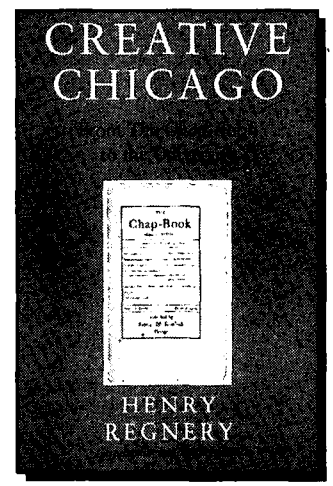

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Hollywood. I feel as if someone could kill me and just laugh about it. I don't like it.

Wednesday

Now is the spring of our discontent. A call from a fellow who worked with me on "Howe High." "It's all over," he said. "The network didn't pick up our show. I heard it from a friend right in the scheduling office.

"Now I have to go back to waiting tables and hoping for comedy gigs," my friend continued. "They thought it was too politically incorrect."

"But that was its whole point," I said. "That's why they made it."

"I know. But I guess they changed their minds."

I know I should be happy just to be in America, to have little Mr. Perfect, to have Alex, to have Ginger the new dog, to have my parents and my sister. But, wow, I wanted that gig. It would have changed my life.

I know what I'll do. I won't believe what I heard. I'll just keep hoping that somehow it gets on. Man is saved by faith and not by works. Yeah. That's what I'll do. I'll hope.

Monday

Memorial Day here in Sandpoint, Idaho. Yesterday Alex and I left Tommy with his pals and drove to Kootenay Bay, Canada. The weather was fierce: hailstorms, freezing rain, sleet, and lightning and thunder. The mountains make their own weather.

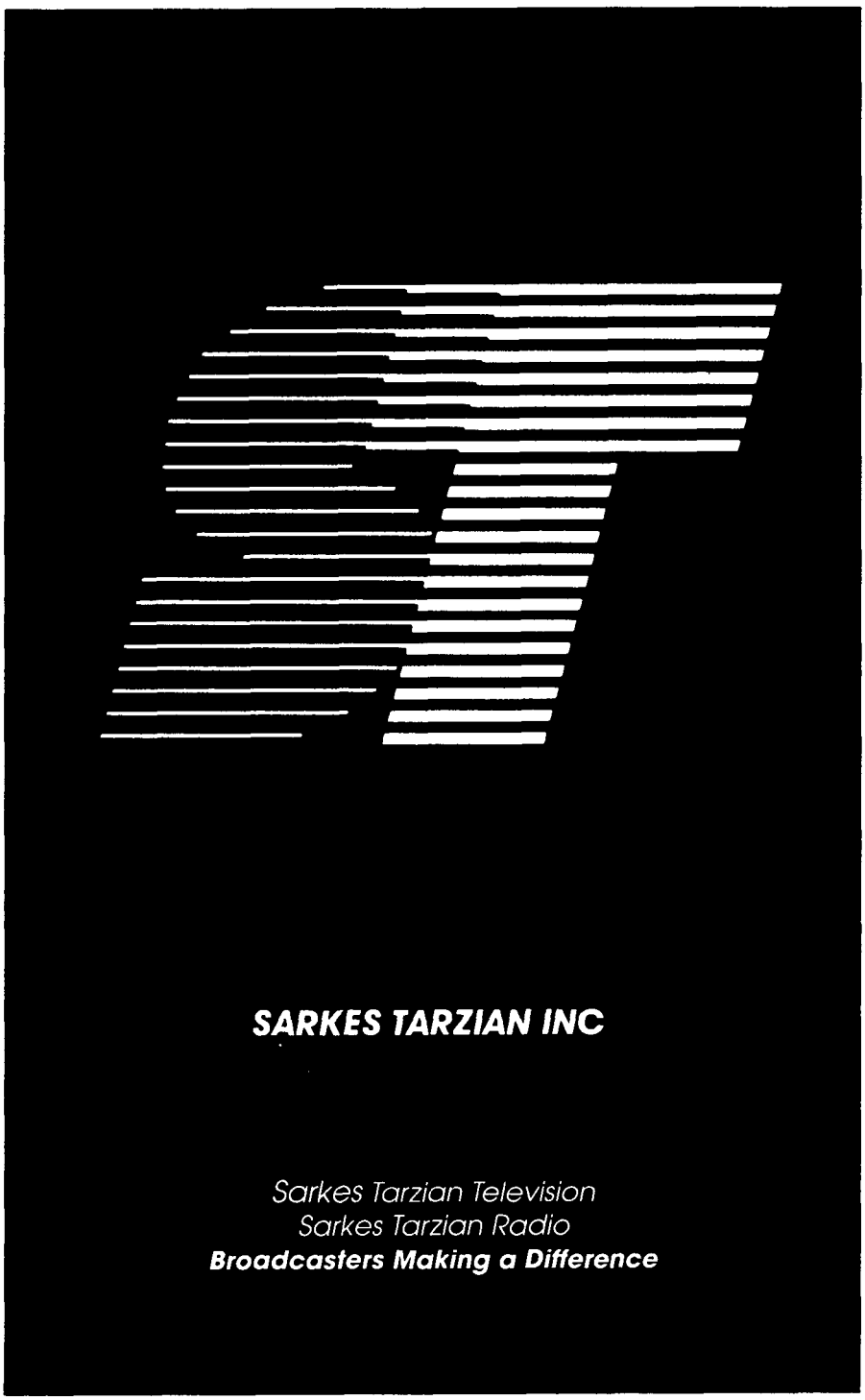
Today, it's beautiful. The sun is reflecting off Lake Pend'Oreille. There's a gentle breeze coming from the Cabinet Mountains. There are about half a dozen kids playing on the beach. Tommy has made friends with some lovely people from Seattle and he's playing with their children along the shore.

After a while, he notices a powerboat dragging a water-skier through the lake. "I want to learn to water ski," says his majesty.

A few minutes later, after an exchange of money and putting Tommy in a wetsuit, we were on the water. The teacher and driver, a man named John, told us he had been a navigator on a nuclear sub. He once spent sixty days under the polar ice cap. When he left the Navy, he moved to Sandpoint more or less by chance. He couldn't tell me how fast his sub went. It was classified. He could tell me he was married, had a home, and was happy to live here.

Tommy was lowered into the water and shivered. His skis fell off. He got upset. He wanted out. It was cold and he was scared. We took him in and he clung to the pylon for the ski rod like it was life or death. "It's all right," I said. "It's all right," Mommy said. "You don't have to go in if you're scared."

Since I had paid for the boat, I asked if I might drive it. I raced it around the lake, narrowly missing a floating log—thanks to John's eagle eyes—and passed by a house I had bid on recently. Then by another, or rather by their docks. On one waterfront lawn, a family played croquet. The sky was perfect azure. Tommy was nestled in my arms and Mommy's. On a day like this, how could "Howe High" not get on? ❐



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Headed for a Big Fall

by Grover G. Norquist

For the first time since 1956, the Republicans this fall will make a serious bid for control of both houses of Congress. Holding 178 seats in the House, the GOP needs a net gain of forty seats to reach the 218 majority. In the Senate, the forty-four sitting Republicans are seven shy of a majority (or six, if, as expected, Alabama Democrat Richard Shelby switches parties or at the very least votes to organize with the Republicans in the event of significant GOP gains). It could happen.

For one thing, as everyone knows, the party out of power fares better in mid–term elections. An average performance alone would boost Republican strength in the House to 192 seats—a high-water mark last achieved in the 1980 Reagan landslide.

Second, the latest congressional redistricting will finally bear fruit this year. The groundwork was laid in 1990, when Republicans won key governorships in Illinois, Massachusetts, and California and increased their presence in state legislatures. During the 1980s, by contrast, Democratic governors colluded with Democratic-controlled legislatures to gerrymander against the Republicans, who estimate they lost up to fifteen seats this way. The fairer reapportionment that was in place in 1992 was undercut by George Bush's weakness in California, Oregon, and Washington, but seats in these states will be prime targets in 1994. Meanwhile, the Democrats now have to face the consequences of the Voting Rights Act: set-aside minority districts wind up diluting Democratic strength in other districts.

Third, thanks largely to Bill Clinton, the GOP has had a great recruiting season. As National Republican Congressional Committee chairman Bill Paxon (R-N.Y.) gleefully points out, Republicans running for the House this year outnumber Democrats 534-485. As of June, moreover, Republicans running for re-election unopposed outnumbered Democrats 33-12. In Florida alone, nine of thirteen House Republicans have no Democratic opponent.

This is a reversal of historic trends. In 1988, sixty-one Democrats (and only ten Republicans) ran unopposed. Just as the Republicans couldn't talk seriously about winning a majority in the House when they didn't contest 15 percent of the seats, says Paxon, "the Democrats cannot seriously be preparing to maintain their majority status if they leave so many seats unchallenged."

Haley Barbour, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, believes this year's bumper crop of candidates is an outgrowth of electoral victories in 1993. "Republicans deciding whether to run for office in 1994 were making that decision in the summer and fall of 1993," Barbour says. "Our best recruiters were Richard Riordan, Kay Bailey Hutchison, George Allen, Christine Todd Whitman, and Rudy Giuliani."

This year, unlike 1982, when a strong field of GOP congressional candidates was done in by recession and gerrymandering, political tides are working against the Democrats. For instance, they're losing a great many House members to retirement. As of mid-June, fully thirty Democratic seats were open versus nineteen for Republicans. Thirteen of these Republicans, moreover, are running for higher office, with most of the rest vacating safe seats; only eight of the Democrats are running for higher office and twenty are leaving behind Southern and marginal districts. One of the retirees, Georgia Rep. Roy Rowland, has long told Republicans he would most likely be the last Democrat to hold his seat.

Democrats have already lost two open House seats this year in Oklahoma and Kentucky—in races that taught the GOP a handful of encouraging lessons:

(1) Party unity and cooperation pay dividends. The party

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gave the maximum $70,000 to each candidate, drawing on state, RNC, congressional, and senatorial committee resources. In an unprecedented move, sixty-four different House members contributed $51,389 to Oklahoman Frank Lucas, and fifty-three members donated $57,142 to Ron Lewis in Kentucky.

It's worth noting that former GOP conference head Jerry Lewis, moderate Nancy Johnson, and ranking Ways and Means member Bill Archer, each with party leadership ambitions, declined to contribute to either campaign. By contrast, Senators Don Nickles of Oklahoma and Mitch McConnell of Kentucky each provided campaign cash to the race in his state.

(2) Term limits, tax reduction, and family values continue to score big. U.S. Term Limits, fresh from victories in fifteen states, is asking all candidates to pledge to vote for limits of six years on House members and twelve on senators. In Oklahoma and Kentucky, both Republicans signed on; both Democrats refused. U.S. Term Limits sent 50,000 direct-mail pieces into Oklahoma identifying the position of each candidate on the issue.

The Christian Coalition printed 90,000 voter guides on each candidate that reflected the breadth of its political interests. The first issues the guide raised were the candidates' positions on the Taxpayer Protection Pledge and on term limits. It also reported on where each candidate stood on gun control.

(3) The depth of hostility to Clinton is creating what Washington calls "negative coattails." Indeed, Republicans decided to enter the Kentucky special election—in a district they'd been shut out of for 129 years—when polls showed only 30 percent would re-elect Clinton.

The Democrats in the recent special elections weren't as liberal as the national standard, but when Kentucky's standard-bearer refused to sign a pledge opposing any health care plan that raised taxes, imposed mandates, or rationed care, he was linked inextricably to the Clinton plan. A devastating television ad, sure to be copied in November, showed the Democrat's face "morphing" through computer imagery into Clinton's and then back while the voice-over listed the similarities of the two men.

James Carville, who was wrong about the power of the tax issue in New Jersey—where his candidate Jim Florio went down for imposing a record tax hike on the state—is also wrong about the supposed power of the health care issue. Republicans in Oklahoma and Kentucky ran against the Clinton plan and government-run health care generally. Ron Lewis's television ads decried "socialist medicine."

(4) There are no safe Democrat seats. Hard work and an anti-Washington, anti-tax, anti-Clinton message have now won in the most unlikely districts. In the past, the national Republican Party would announce a "target list" of maybe twenty-five seats. This not only allowed Democrats to focus their defensive efforts, but discouraged contributions to Republicans not "targeted." Republican leaders looking at Oklahoma and Kentucky won't make that mistake again.

In the Senate, there are twenty-three Democratic and only twelve Republican seats up for election. As in the House, Democratic retirements leave many seats vulnerable. George Mitchell's inexplicable retirement turns his secure Maine seat into a probable pickup for Republican Rep. Olympia Snowe. David Boren's move to the University of Oklahoma puts his Oklahoma seat in play. The departures of Senators DeConcini, Riegle, and Metzenbaum leave Arizona, Michigan, and Ohio distinct GOP possibilities. In California, Michael Huffington's personal wealth and a competent campaign have brought him neck and neck with the formerly invincible Dianne Feinstein.

Democratic losses could skyrocket if serious hearings are held on Whitewater, or if the Dan Rostenkowski trial erupts, or if further details emerge on the abuse of presidential helicopters, or on Clinton's personal promiscuity, or on Hillary's personal investing. A dozen swords of Damocles dangle over the heads of Democrat candidates for the House and Senate. In the words of one House member, "They hate Clinton for it. They dread opening the next morning's paper." It could be 1974 all over again—in reverse.

Clinton's hopes for a turnaround are slim. His health care plan is backfiring. Dianne Feinstein formally renounced her co-sponsorship of the Clinton plan in June—right after Clinton spoke at a fundraiser on her behalf! The promise that "welfare reform" would reinvigorate Clinton's "New Democrat" image fizzled when his plan was released on June 14. It promises to increase spending by $9 billion—not exactly the tough "two years and out" promised in the 1993 State of the Union.

Democrats hoping that a growing economy will save them must come to grips with the history of 1966—a year with stronger economic growth than 1994—when Democrats lost forty-seven House seats.

Republican worry-warts point to the "rally round the flag" effect war with North Korea or a Haiti invasion might have. It's just as likely that Americans would view such actions as products of Clinton's weakness and his trashing of the military. Even a grand success like the Persian Gulf War showed that presidential popularity can be fleeting.

Even if Clinton tries to turn things around with some bold speech or new proposal, it will fall on deaf ears, for he no longer enjoys a reserve of voter goodwill. Bush floundered in 1992 because he'd lied on taxes. Clinton has lost voter trust not because of a single betrayal, but because of an endless string of falsehoods, fabrications, fibs, and outright lies.

On election day 1992, an exit poll found that Americans by a margin of 55 to 36 preferred smaller government with fewer services and lower taxes to larger government with more services and higher taxes. Only Clinton voters expressed a preference for bigger government, by 55 to 36 percent. Clinton's base, in other words, is a photographic negative of the country as a whole.

Any move to speak to the entire nation would further depress his base; any bold stroke to invigorate his left-leaning base would antagonize the larger electorate. The harshest truth that Clinton and his party must face is that he is the heir to a worldview that simply no longer resonates with the American public. ❐

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Not Up to Speed

by James Bowman

For those who still profess bafflement about the meaning of "postmodernism" here is a simple definition: it is the process by which *The Wolf Man* has become ***Wolf***, Mike Nichols's ironic homage to the horror film. When did cinematic horror become funny anyway? Somewhere between *Werewolf of London* (1935) and *An American Werewolf in London* (1981), it became impossible to play horror straight anymore. That's what postmodernism has done. Like the miasma of evil from an old-fashioned horror film, it has consumed in turn each of the old genres—Western, gangster movie, family melodrama, and so forth—and turned them into jokes.

The result is a crop of cinematic pod people: more or less clever comedies but bland, anodyne, and self-referential, endlessly sending up the conventions of the half-remembered genre to which they now bear only the most superficial resemblance. It is as pointless to ask if *Wolf* is any good as a horror film as it is to ask if *Maverick* is any good as a Western. Neither the horror film material nor the Western material is used as anything except the basis for the pastiche, the joke. The only question for the critic to ask in this brave new, postmodern world is this: Is it any good as a joke?

As it happens, the joke in *Wolf* is pretty good. Jack Nicholson stars as Will Randall, a senior editor with a New York publisher which has just been taken over by a giant media conglomerate ruled by Raymond Alden (Christopher Plummer), a ruthless cutter of anything not conducive to large profits. Will, who once rejected a Judith Krantz novel on the grounds that, as he told her, "no semi-literate 14-year-old would read it" (a less than devastating put-down, since plenty of semi-literate 44-year-olds did), is an obvious candidate for redundancy. Various of his colleagues, including the oleaginous Stewart (James Spader), offer to go with him if he is dismissed, but he is more liked than respected. "You're a nice man," says Alden; "it's a good thing I got rid of you."

But after Will is bitten on the hand by a wolf, he begins, like the heroes of the old horror flicks, to take on lupine characteristics. No more is he the passive victim of the brutal Plummer or the treacherous Stewart, who has not only

taken his job but is sleeping with his wife. "The worm has turned," he tells the folks at work, "and now he's packing an Uzi." Of course, he gets his job back—and he gets Alden's gorgeous pouting daughter (Michelle Pfeiffer) into the bargain. "If I had known you were this ruthless," says the tycoon, "I would never have fired you in the first place." But Stewart also turns into a werewolf, and the joke becomes exquisite as the two bookish publishing executives with alarmingly aggressive dentition and hair sprouting from unlikely places writhe around in the dirt trying to tear each other's throat out.

That's the modern media for you! In the end, instead of the fair maiden's love saving the lycanthrope for humanity, the two of them run off to the woods for a guilt-free gambol together as wolves *tout court*. Though not, perhaps, intentional, this is the best joke, as the romance novel meets Hollywood animal-sentimentality and we get Free Willy-werewolf.

There is nothing to compare with this in ***The Flintstones***, where the joke is not very good, or else too obvious and too often repeated. Brian Levant's live-action version of the television cartoon (starring John Goodman as Fred and Elizabeth Perkins as Wilma) casts prehistory in the image not of the 1990s but the 1950s. Cavemen, we find, had milk delivery and drive-in movies and drive-in restaurants where they attached a tray to your car window; they had all-male bowling nights and arcane lodge rituals and were married to stay-at-home housewives who were goofily smitten with the charge card. They had mother-in-law jokes.

Who outside of the 1950s or early 60s would even have understood the joke about being "a modern stone-age family"? There are, to be sure, some 1990s touches: The entertainment at the Cavern on the Green is the B.C. 52s, there is a Cave News Network and a re-enactment of Fred's supposed crime (don't ask: it would take too long to explain and the plot doesn't matter anyway) by an actor who plays Dr. Gravelman on "The Young and the Thumbless." Likewise, there is a song called "Bone to Run" by Bruce Springstone. But these jokes, not exactly knee-slappers in the first place, are irrelevancies. For all intents and purposes, this is an almost unbelievably conscientious attempt to reproduce the original "Flintstones" car-

James Bowman, The American Spectator*'s movie critic, is the American editor of the* Times Literary Supplement.

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toon with all its 1950s cultural references, right down to Rosie O'Donnell's mastery of Betty Rubble's laugh.

You have to stand back in admiration, really, at what nostalgia has wrought. *The Flintstones* is a series of technical challenges rather than a movie. The sets and the special effects are the stars. Hanna and Barbera drew up the blueprints thirty years ago, and now, at last, we have the cinematic engineering skills to produce the real thing. Jim Henson's Creature Shop produced the prehistoric beasts to order, but the actors also have the cartoon features just right. Fred Flintstone's bowling style, involving a gravity defying tiptoe shuffle, is here reproduced. So too is his flying heel click. Even the sort of cartoon disasters where a character is smashed up and then gets up again are essayed: Fred gets hit in the head by a flying bowling ball; Barney (Rick Moranis) is flattened against a cliff face. Neither are the worse for the wear.

This parade of images is a continuous demonstration that the technical challenges of re-creating the old cartoon have been overcome. Why anyone would want to bother to try to overcome them is another matter. Like postmodernism it is the kind of thing you expect from a country where taste and artistic forms are disparaged or dead but there is still plenty of money.

Besides making jokes, the only thing that Hollywood can hope to do well is special effects. The Spielbergian death-defying switchback ride uncluttered by any concern with characters or ideas but punctuated with a great many satisfying explosions is skillfully done by Jan De Bont in ***Speed***, but he doesn't know when to stop doing it. Never has hair's-breadth escape from certain death seemed so boringly predictable as it does by the end of this film.

First the elevator, then the bus, then the train: we begin to look at our watches and wonder how many more forms of transportation are going to smash up harmlessly around Keanu Reeves, how many more impossible situations is he going to get out of by doing the opposite of the expected thing—which has long since become a very expected thing. And this is to say nothing of the preposterousness of the film's "high" concept. Why should the mad bomber (Dennis Hopper—also predictable) rig his bomb to arm itself when the bus's speedometer hits 50 miles per hour and to explode when it goes below 50 miles per hour again? Why not just detonate the thing by remote control while the bus is standing still? His modus operandi makes no sense except insofar as it provides the occasion for an action movie.

In other words the film, in the true postmodern style, takes no pains to appear other than highly artificial and cinematic—and, as so often, this suggests to me not wit or irony so much as contempt for the audience, whose capacity for credulity is deemed infinite, as well as for the ostensible subject matter, whose unreality is a matter of indifference. But maybe that's just me. One of our most distinguished film critics has professed in my hearing admiration for both *Wolf* and *Speed* while disparaging the plausibility of my Movie of the Month, ***White*** by Krzysztof Kieslowski, because in it a man survives traveling in a suitcase checked through as luggage on a flight from Paris to Warsaw! Is this so incredible? I wouldn't have thought so.

White is the second in Kieslowski's three-part series based on the colors of the French revolutionary flag and the corresponding revolutionary demand for *liberté, égalité, fraternité. Blue* took on *liberté* in an interestingly non-political way, and *White* is an even more interesting look at *egalité*—also non-political but with a political dimension that remains entirely implicit. It tells the story of a Polish hairdresser called Karol Karol (Zbigniew Zamachowski) who, as we meet him, is on his way into a divorce court in Paris. His French wife, Dominique (Julie Delpy), is divorcing him on the grounds that their marriage is unconsummated. He pleads that the problem is just temporary, that he needs a little time, but Dominique is unmoved. When she tells the judge that she doesn't love him anymore, Karol becomes violently ill.

"If I say I love you, you don't understand, and if I say I hate you, you still don't understand," she tells him. There is, we can't tell how, an unbreakable thread of connection between the two of them that continues even after she mercilessly has him stripped of money and credit cards and then sets fire to the curtains in their former salon. She informs him that she will accuse him before the police so that he will be left hunted as well as destitute. He tries to telephone her. She says, "Perfect timing! Listen!" and lets him hear the sounds of her sexual excitement with another man. Her merciless savagery toward him is breathtaking, of archetypal proportions.

As he tries to beg a few coins by playing on a comb and paper in the subway, he meets a fellow Pole, Mikolaj (Janusz Gajos), who agrees to smuggle him back into Poland in the suitcase because his passport has been confiscated along with everything else by the lawyers. On arrival in Warsaw, the suitcase is stolen, and when the thieves find Karol inside they beat him up. As he rolls down the hill into a pile of garbage he says, "Home at last!" From this abject state, however, he gradually recovers with help from his brother, from Mikolaj, and from a black market currency trader. He begins to make money and before long is rich.

Throughout this process there are wonderfully amusing and evocative scenes and very occasional reminders of his continued love for Dominique. He makes a will leaving everything to her. Then he stages his own death with a black-market corpse ("these days you can buy anything," says his factotum: "You don't mind a Russian import?"). Karol watches from a distance as Dominique, arrived from France to claim her sizable inheritance, cries at his funeral. As she returns to her hotel room, he is waiting for her. Naturally she is shocked to find him alive, but he talks her into bed. At last he is able to make love successfully; she has a shattering climax of which he says with satisfaction, "You moaned louder than on the phone." Then, as she sleeps, he steals away.

Shortly after, the police arrive, accusing her of complicity in his murder. She says that he is not dead, but of course he has by then disappeared without a trace. In the final scene we see her in prison, making sign language out the window to the effect that if he will get her out of there, she will love him again and they will be happy. As he watches this dumbshow through binoculars a tear rolls down his cheek. He has learned, as perhaps Poland has learned about its love for the West—or perhaps as every lover in an unequal relationship has to learn—that what he thought was a matter of love was really a matter of power. Such scary thoughts and images are beyond the capacities of postmodernism. But the Poles haven't yet enough money to be postmoderns. ❐

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THE AGENDA: INSIDE THE CLINTON WHITE HOUSE

Bob Woodward

Simon & Schuster / 336 pages / $24

reviewed by DAVID BROCK

The most telling revelations in Bob Woodward's *The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House* produced no headlines, because they are not the kind that readers have come to expect from the reporter of Watergate fame. The only scandal here is that members of the president's inner circle were willing to confide in Woodward their inner-most fears and frustrations and disappointments regarding Clinton's personal failings so early in his presidency. (At least the Reagan folk had the sense to publish their kiss-and-tell memoirs when any damage could be confined to the historical record.)

This book, make no mistake about it, does a good deal of damage in the here and now. The portrait of Clinton that emerges is of an undisciplined, indecisive, emotionally fragile man-child who shouldn't be trusted with the keys to the family car on a Saturday night, let alone the nuclear codes. He is indefatigable, yet in the service of no fixed views or beliefs. His sole preoccupation appears to be how to "crawl through to re-election," as Clinton himself is said to have aptly phrased it. The "news" here is that despite an innate intelligence, an undeniable charm, and an incomparable energy level, Clinton is ill-equipped to be president.

In keeping with his signature style, Woodward never uses such blunt language and generally shies away from judgments of any sort. For my taste, he takes this neutrality principle too far in this book, to the point that the narrative limps forward not on an argument, an idea, or even a clever structure but on an endless (and often redundant) catalogue of meetings and memos. The reader is obliged to intuit too much, and may end up, as I did, wishing the author had sweated a bit more over the project. *Veil*, by contrast, a study of the intelligence community during the Reagan years, struck a better balance between reporting and explaining, and the prose had some bite.

But everyone has his role to play, and whatever the book's analytical and literary shortcomings, Woodward has once again done yeoman work in securing the kind of access to the highest levels in government that no other reporter can match. Of course, no other reporter could get away with offering the blanket protections that are apparently necessary to gain this sort of access. There is no way to judge whether quoted dialogue—not to mention attributed thoughts and feelings—has come from a first-hand source or is merely hearsay. Nor do we know exactly which material in the book has been corroborated by more than one source, a journalistic rule of thumb. Woodward is playing on a field all by himself.

It is also clear that Woodward does his homework, takes great care to get the story right, and has rarely been successfully challenged on factual grounds. As in his previous work, what really matters is the indisputable fact that his unconventional techniques continue to pay off for the reader. Indeed, one can almost hear Clinton whining that no other sitting president has had to contend with Bob Woodward as a fly on the wall for his first 500 days.

Ostensibly, Woodward tells the story of a war for the Clinton economic program between two factions: the bloodless deficit-cutters culled from Wall Street and Congress (Lloyd Bentsen, Robert Rubin, Leon Panetta, Alice Rivlin, and Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan) who wish to pursue an "inside" strategy, not unlike that of the Bush administration, keyed to the financial markets and the congressional leadership; and the fiery, populist-leaning political advisers (James Carville, Paul Begala, Stan Greenberg, and Mandy Grunwald) who favor big-spending programs, heavy taxes on "the rich," and direct appeals to the electorate. Hillary Clinton, George Stephanopoulos, Al Gore, and David Gergen appear as more or less honest brokers, with the former two tilting more toward the politicos and the latter two toward the insiders.

What happened to the tax-cutting, welfare-reforming "New Democrat" of the '92 campaign is anybody's guess, though there are hints in Stephanopoulos's confession that Clinton's promises "didn't add up" and Rivlin's declaration that the campaign "fundamentally misrepresented" the problems posed by the deficit.

As Woodward tells it, Clinton, suffering from "near terminal ambivalence" over the substance of his program, gets rolled by the intimidating Washington graybeards, Bentsen and Greenspan, who believe that deficit reduction and higher taxes will spur economic recovery by reassuring the bond market. Whether or not this is smart politics or economics Woodward doesn't say (Clinton himself, however, calls his plan a "turkey" at one

David Brock is the author of The Real Anita Hill *(Free Press), recently issued in paperback, and an investigative writer for* The American Spectator.

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point); the author appears blithely unaware that long-interest rates are back to where they were at the beginning of the administration, that the tax hike will bring in less than the anticipated revenue, and that future deficit projections remain high due to uncontrolled domestic spending.

In any event, precisely how the two groups fought out their differences, cursed each other, and finally came together to pass the "recovery" plan last summer, is, for my money, far less illuminating than the fact that all of the players seem to agree in their rather grim assessment of Clinton. And so, as did *Veil* and *The Commanders*, Woodward's book on the Persian Gulf war councils of the Bush administration, *The Agenda* was conceived as a book about process but shades into a character study along the way. It turns out that it's not the economy, stupid, after all.

The real conflict is not among the advisers, but within Clinton, who is shown to be so racked with self-doubt and in the grip of "psychological anguish" as to be virtually paralyzed when it's time to lead. This does not inspire confidence or respect (or, on the evidence of this book, loyalty). Vice President Gore, Woodward reports, "saw that Clinton was too shaky and tentative in his public, let alone his private, pronouncements. . . . When Clinton asked Gore one day 'What can I do?' Gore's exasperation boiled over and the vice president said, 'You can get with the goddamn program!'" Clinton responded weakly, "Okay." When Clinton was unable to decide whether to abandon his proposal for a BTU energy tax, Bentsen unilaterally announced on a Sunday talk show that it was being dropped. "He hadn't felt a need to consult with anyone, even the president, so he had gone ahead on his own," Woodward writes. Clinton followed Lord Bentsen.

The person who most often rushes to fill the void, however, is Hillary. "Without Hillary Clinton, he would be the most popular law professor at Arkansas Law School," Paul Begala is quoted as saying. Though she originally sought appointment as the domestic policy adviser, she has come to function in the less formal but powerful role of de facto chief of staff, according to Woodward. (Mack McLarty is depicted here as a cipher.) Though she is tougher and more decisive than her husband, her effectiveness seems undercut by a juvenile sense of self-righteousness and an us-against-them mentality that warps her judgment. She speaks often of the need to have "villains and heroes" in explaining their policies and at one point tells the staff, "I believe in evil and I think there are evil people in the world." Hillary doesn't quite say who these evil people are, but one can infer that she means those who don't agree with her.

Hillary shares with Bill an ability to lawyer the truth; so long as they are wearing the white hats, normal ethics don't apply. In lobbying Rep. Martin Lancaster, a North Carolina Democrat, for his vote on the economic plan, Hillary promised that her health care plan wouldn't single out tobacco for more taxes. When it did (the only other tax was on big businesses that didn't join the proposed pools of insurance buyers), Lancaster called Hillary to charge double-cross. According to Woodward, "The conversation was on the phone, and Lancaster wondered whether she made her assertion with a straight face. Hillary had not been specific [in her promise], and she believed that people often heard what they wanted to hear."

This is not to imply that Clinton himself is impassive; on the contrary, he blows his top almost daily, in venting sessions nicknamed "the wave" that alarmed some of the grown men around him. He also gets teary-eyed at odd moments, such as when asking Rep. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky for her crucial vote for the tax bill. And Clinton apparently takes others on the emotional roller-coaster with him. Mandy Grunwald goes into "a tailspin of depression" when Clinton backs out of a fight, and even the unflappable David Gergen is quoted as saying "I'm so depressed I can barely speak" after one inconclusive meeting with both Clintons. (Indeed, perhaps Clinton should have spent more time with Woodward, who seems to have functioned for his sources not as a reporter but as a therapist.) Though Woodward looks long and hard, ultimately he doesn't find much character to study, only a jumble of unpredictable feelings and impulses. In one emblematic scene, James Carville takes a piece of paper, draws a square, and taps it with his pen. "Where is the hallowed ground? Where does [Clinton] stand? What does he stand for?" According to George Stephanopoulos, "with any single audience or person, Clinton was generally consistent and had mastered his rap. But he could articulate a totally different, even contradictory rap to the next audience with genuine sincerity." The damning quotes keep piling up: A memo from pollster Stan Greenberg begins, "One of the central problems we face is the perception that there's no coherence or principle or purpose to the president's actions."

In an astonishing scene seven months into the administration, Woodward reports that Clinton actually asks his advisers "where [are] the American people in terms of basic values?" and how "might he reach into that system of beliefs?" One can't imagine any recent president so rudderless. Woodward quotes Sen. Bob Kerrey, who is floated here as a potential primary opponent in '96, as saying that Clinton's "problem is not just economic but moral. . . . I mean, what's this presidency about?"

At the end of the book, Woodward delivers one of the few conclusions that he permits himself, suggesting that Clinton's eerie lack of commitment to anything other than his political career has made it "almost impossible to craft such a message," and that Clinton seems unable to "find the high ground or establish his moral authority."

This may be so because Clinton simply may not have a firm sense of right and wrong—a moral compass, if you will. One quote has stayed with me more than any other: Speaking in the wake of the Gennifer Flowers allegations, George Stephanopoulos says, "A normal person would have dropped out of the race." Exactly.

One gets the impression that this portrait of Clinton has not come easily or comfortably to Woodward, who writes with the utmost delicacy, even skittishness, about these personal shortcomings. Like his sources (he seems to have spent no time with the Republican opposition) the author voted for Clinton and had high hopes for this presidency, he said in a recent interview with PBS's Charlie Rose. Yet after eighteen months of research on his first book about a Democratic president (he chose to write about the Supreme Court during the Carter years), Woodward seems as disturbed and disillusioned and depressed as apparently everyone else around the president.

Pushed to the wall by Rose on why he would be reluctant to vote for Clinton again, Woodward cited "the promises not yet realized; there are lots of questions about whether he can manage the presiden-

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cy; there are questions that are not dealt with in this book." Indeed, though they are admittedly beyond the purview of his inquiry, Woodward concludes with a scene of Bill and Hillary ruminating about the raft of scandals from the Arkansas days that have come back to haunt them in recent months, stories that seem only to have confirmed what Woodward's reporting about their White House days reveals. ❐

LIFE OF THE PARTY: THE BIOGRAPHY OF PAMELA DIGBY CHURCHILL HAYWARD HARRIMAN

Christopher Ogden

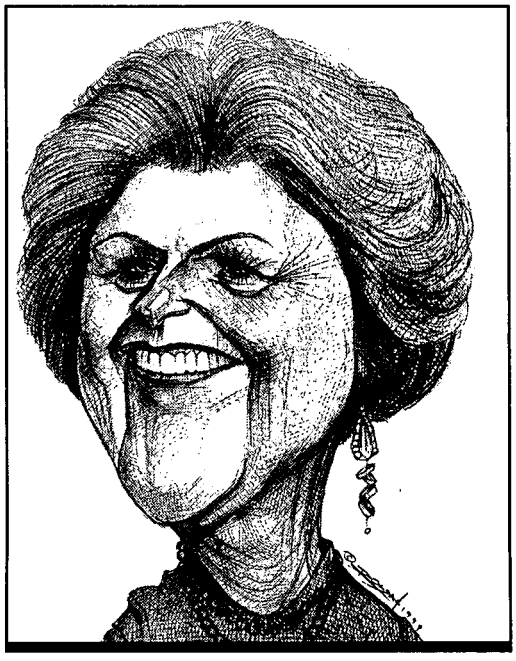
Little, Brown / 504 pages / $24.95

reviewed by ANDREW FERGUSON

What I like best about this book is the dustjacket— a lush, almost lurid photograph (from *Vogue* magazine) of a carefully coiffed and painstakingly coutured Pamela Harriman caught in mid-shriek. The poor old gal looks as if she just spotted the men in white suits bursting through the door to take her away. Above her in blood-red type is the title, which, given Mrs. Harriman's history of hosting and fund-raising for Democrats, is a double entendre; and the subtitle—note that this is "The," not "A," biography—reeks of confidence. On the back a blurb from the gossip columnist Suzy tells us that Mrs. Harriman is "catnip to men." All of which reflects the book itself: a bit unfair, pleasantly trashy, overcute and catty, and utterly engrossing. You can too tell a book by its cover.

Does Mrs. Harriman any longer require an introduction? For those who would like one it is best to work backward. Today she is United States Ambassador to France, appointed by President Clinton, who recently called her "the First Lady of the Democratic Party," and did so right in front of Hillary. (You can bet they had to nail down the White House crockery that night.) France is her reward for a decade of fund-raising in which she lassoed $12 million for Democratic congressional candidates. She needed the work though not the money, for she had spent the previous decade propping up her third husband, the ailing Averell Harriman, until his death at 94. She married Harriman, a lover from her youth, even as the body of her second husband, the famous show business agent Leland Hayward, was cooling off. A child of British nobility, she met her first husband, Randolph Churchill, at the dawn of World War II, the bulk of which she spent in the company of Randolph's father Winston.

It is an amazing life, rich with amazing stories, so it's no surprise that behind this book lies an interesting story, too. In mid-1991, Mrs. Harriman decided to write her autobiography. Like most famous people who decide they want to write, she immediately hired a writer, in this instance a correspondent for *Time* magazine named Christopher Ogden. For the next several months Ogden wheedled out of her and into his tape recorder dozens of tales of romance and intrigue. His success at getting her to talk was so great that she apparently forgot that all this stuff might be *published.* When the realization dawned, she backed out of the project and cut off communication with her ghost. Lawyers stepped in, and the imbroglio was closely chronicled in the gossip pages. Ogden kept the tapes, however, and, using them on "background" to supplement his own interviews with other sources, produced his no longer authorized biography.



I'm in no position to judge Christopher Ogden's journalistic ethics—maybe we can get Walter Cronkite or Fred Friendly to weigh in—but we should be grateful for his book. Ogden calls Mrs. Harriman's "one of the most fascinating lives of the century," and the exaggeration is only slight. Though her feminist colleagues in the Democratic Party will curdle at the thought, Mrs. Harriman's life draws its fascination largely from the fascinating men she has assiduously cultivated. Catnip may be too weak a word for her charm. Apparently Ogden himself isn't immune, to judge by the narrative's many references to Mrs. Harriman's full bosom and wiggling bottom:

> Her complexion was ivory with just a hint of blush . . . . Her voice is erogenous and can skip across the scales of an aural keyboard, one moment sounding like the clink of polished sterling on a Waterford goblet, the next, like the soft, popping bubbles of the Pol Roger inside. Tonight, her voice was low, with a sexy croaky catch . . .

Down boy!

This is a good example of Ogden's tone, which some might find too racy but which is in fact perfectly suited to its subject. Mrs. Harriman was born in 1920 and raised in country-house comfort during that Wodehousian idyll between the wars. But her parents were distant and

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forbidding, and by Ogden's account the neglect created in her an unquenchable craving for security, power, and prestige. These are what she sought from her men, who more often than not were more concerned with her wiggling bottom.

Randolph, for example, was a famous drunk and womanizer. But she bore him a son, named Winston, who forever bound her to the child's grandfather. The marriage was effectively over by the time the war was underway. She spent her pregnancy at No. 10 Downing Street, waiting out the Blitz in a safe room below ground, with old Winston snoring in the upper half of the bunk bed she shared with him. After the child was born she packed him off to the country home of Lord Beaverbrook, one of her many protectors. (She would raise her son by long-distance ever after.) Mrs. Harriman thereupon began a series of wartime affairs. First up to bat was Averell, whom FDR and Harry Hopkins had chosen as special envoy to Churchill. Winston, says Ogden, fully approved Pamela's liaison, since it gave him, through the medium of pillowtalk, a special insight to American thinking in the months before Pearl Harbor. Of course Averell was married at the time, but Pamela nevertheless nurtured the hope that at war's end he would leave his wife and marry her. Right.

After Harriman was shipped off to Moscow, where he began a different kind of love affair with Stalin, Mrs. Harriman took up with Edward R. Murrow. Of course Murrow was married at the time, but Pamela nevertheless nurtured the hope that at war's end he would leave his wife and marry her. Sure. And there were many more: generals, colonels, entertainers. They would sometimes pass each other on the stairs to her flat on Grosvenor Square. Not all of her guests were lovers, of course; Grosvenor Square was also the site of her first salon. She preferred American men to Brits, but mainly she just preferred men. "Pamela," writes Ogden, with rare understatement, "was not a one-man girl." Oh, do tell.

Among its many delights, Ogden's book offers a detailed account of the inbreeding of the upper classes. To pick loose a single strand from the sordid tapestry: Pamela had an affair with Jock Whitney, who was earlier married to Liz Altemus, who later married Harry Hopkins, who fixed Pamela up with Averell, who introduced her to Ed Murrow's boss Bill Paley, who slept with Pamela (natch) and who married Babe Cushing after she divorced Stanley Mortimer, who later married Averell's daughter Kathleen around the time that Babe's sister Betsey married Jock. And we wonder why the children of rich people always seem a little slow.

After the war, divorced from Randolph, Pamela maintained this torrid pace. She moved to Paris, where she was serially kept in accustomed grandeur by rich fops of the type later known as Eurotrash: Aly Kahn, Elie de Rothschild, Gianni Agnelli, and others. Her son was off at some boarding school somewhere. The Duchess of Windsor—"the most perfect wife in the world"—taught her the finer points of entertaining and decorating, which the Duchess was otherwise wasting on her drooling husband. By the end of the fifties Pamela grew bored with Paris. She wanted to marry, but by now she was merely a famous mistress—catnip, yes; altar material, no. She looked for a way to move to America, where, after all, one was apt to find American men in larger numbers. The main chance presented itself in the person of Hayward, who was estranged from his wife. Pamela appeared, and he actually married her.

Her experiences from those years make for splendid reading, notwithstanding Ogden's florid style. The woman who endured the Blitz with Churchill also weekended with Cary Grant at Leeds, the most picturesque castle in England; she daytripped with the young JFK but, *mirabile dictu*, didn't score (his Addison's Disease was acting up); she was given the latest clothes by the actual Christian Dior; she sat next to Murrow in the studio as he made his legendary wartime broadcasts from London. At the bar in the Ritz, Hemingway wrote pornographic poems about her. She oversaw the courtship of Aly Kahn and Rita Hayworth, and sat by as Rodgers and Hammerstein composed *The Sound of Music*. Truman Capote wrote two short stories with Pamela serving as main character.

Yet she embroiders her life in the retelling to this day; for women in Mrs. Harriman's line of work, the need to dissemble must be primal. Thanks to his peculiar relationship with her, Ogden has not only Pamela's less reliable account but also those of her friends, family, acquaintances, and enemies. He catches her in several instances of résumé-padding and worse. She vows she met Hitler briefly before the war; Ogden doubts her account, and his researches seem to bear him out. She claims a close political association with Bobby Kennedy, though none of Kennedy's courtiers recalls it. And so on.

The thin vein of insecurity thus revealed is almost touching and perfectly understandable. You won't be surprised to know that while Pamela was catnip to men, their wives held her in rather lower regard. "I didn't admire the kind of person she was," Mrs. Murrow told the author, kindly. "She always moves in when wives are off duty," says a Rothschild. "Pam's a witch," says another. Babe Paley called her, simply, "that bitch." Relations with in-laws and various step-children were equally strained, particularly when it came time for the reading of the wills. Pam lost their allegiance but got the money.

Her marriage to Harriman, with whom she re-established contact after both were widowed in the early 1970s, was her ticket to Washington and the inner sanctum of the Democratic Party. Together they served as goodwill emissaries under President Carter. By this time the old fellow, who had never been known for his intellect or savvy, was almost *non compos mentis*. On one overnight flight aboard an Air Force jet, Averell slept in a pull-out bed that, upon landing, was folded up with him in it; when the stewards finally found him he seemed not to have noticed. But his millions, soon to be hers, guaranteed that both would be honored and prized by the party of the working man. Her star rose during the Reagan tyranny, and shone undiminished after Averell's death in 1984. She was an early backer of candidate Clinton, though she worried, with the air of an expert, about "his zipper problem." It was a good bet, on both counts. And now Paris is hers.

Ogden's biography is exhaustive—maybe too exhaustive; 100 pages or more could have been cut without regret. It is nonetheless a signal contribution to our popular literature. Mrs. Harriman's first salon, on Grosvenor Square in wartime London, included Ike and Waugh and Kenneth Clark; her last, in Georgetown in the 1990s, boasted Al Gore and Dana Carvey. Though he surely didn't mean to, Christopher Ogden has written an eloquent account of the decline of the West. ❐

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A TALENT FOR GENIUS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF OSCAR LEVANT

Sam Kashner and Nancy Schoenberger

Villard Books / 512 pages / $25

reviewed by JOE QUEENAN

A brilliant pianist, but not an immortal like his friend Vladimir Horowitz; a talented songwriter, but not a colossus like his friend George Gershwin; a creditable composer, but not a titan like his friend Arnold Schoenberg; a brilliant satirist, but not a legend like his friend Dorothy Parker—Oscar Levant spent his entire life being extremely good at things that his best friends were better at. A mixture of Mozart's Salieri, Brahms's Schumann, Shakespeare's Marlowe, Mantle's Maris, and Borg's Gerulaitis, he was an utterly miserable human being: a hypochondriac, a drug addict, a philanderer, and a jerk. "You'll never be a Paderewski, but you'll never be lonely," his mother told him early in life. Mom, not the most normal of people, either, was about half-right.

In *A Talent for Genius*, Sam Kashner, a TV writer and poet, and wife Nancy Schoenberger, also a poet, argue that Levant was cursed by an inability to decide whether to take the high road of Art (classical music) or the low road of Commerce (being a regular guest on radio quiz shows). It is not surprising that in his lifetime he was most famous for his renditions of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Concerto in F*, written by the American composer who had the most success in fusing the demands of art and commerce. But with the passage of time, Levant's fame has receded because everybody under the sun has recorded those two compositions, and because pianists do not achieve immortality by playing Gershwin, a far greater songwriter than a composer, but by playing Chopin, Debussy, Bach, Liszt, Beethoven. Ask Schnabel. Or Horowitz.

A Talent for Genius succeeds because it is at least as much a book about an age as it is a book about an individual. What's more, America was a more interesting country in the twenties and thirties because there were more people like Gershwin and Levant and Schoenberg, and fewer people like Sting and Madonna and Philip Glass. Levant himself may have had the most interesting life of anyone who lived in this century. Born to mildly affluent Russian Jewish immigrants in Pittsburgh in 1906, he was trained to be a classical pianist but

dropped out of high school and started playing popular tunes in New York roadhouses and speakeasies. With gangsters and showgirls as his mentors, Levant soon became the ultimate man about town, developing a reputation as a talented pianist but a bit of an imp. When a diner in a restaurant where he was playing a piece by Mozart requested "a livelier tune," Levant began playing Bach. He was promptly fired.

That incident defines Levant's career: he was a slummer par excellence. What other musician can we imagine appearing in a whole series of inane Hollywood musicals—playing himself—while studying composition with Schoenberg, the father of atonal music? What other musician can we imagine composing both a dirge performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and a song called "Tanned Legs"? What other musician . . . well, come to think of it, we can think of Lenny Bernstein, yet another Levant associate blessed with more talent than Oscar. Asked about Bernstein's music, Levant said, "It reflects a great knowledge—of other composers' music." Asked about Lenny the Pedagogue, he commented, "Leonard Bernstein has been disclosing musical secrets that have been well-known for over 400 years."

A case can be made that Levant missed his real calling: as a satirist. For even though he once commanded higher concert fees than Horowitz or Artur Rubinstein, Levant is not going to be remembered as a pianist, much less a composer or songwriter. But on the basis of the wisecracks for which he is famous, he could have been one of the funniest writers ever.

"What did you want to be when you were a kid?" Jack Paar once asked him on the "Tonight" show.

"An orphan," Levant replied.

There were many other celebrated gags. Of operetta composer Sigmund Romberg, he remarked: "He writes the kind of music you whistle on the way into the theater." Asked by Vernon Duke, composer of "April in Paris," what he thought of the serious compositions that Duke had penned under the name Vladimir Dukelsky, Levant replied, "For a man who's destined for obscurity, why do you need two names?" Bumping into Greta Garbo, he joked, "Sorry, I didn't catch the name."

Levant, it should be noted, was the first entertainer to come on national television and talk about his assorted drug addictions. Accordingly, our pity should be mixed with revulsion, as Levant in his own way helped midwife the careers of Geraldo Rivera and Sally Jessy Raphael. Despite the abuse he inflicted on his body, this remarkable jack-of-all-trades survived until his sixty-fifth year, passing away minutes before a visit by Candice Bergen, then an aspiring photojournalist. Good thing he never saw her act; he would have died sooner. ❐

Joe Queenan is most recently the author of If You're Talking to Me, Your Career Must Be in Trouble *(Hyperion).*

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VICTORY: THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S SECRET STRATEGY THAT HASTENED THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

Peter Schweizer

Atlantic Monthly Press / 284 pages / $22

reviewed by FRED BARNES

For nearly three decades after World War II, one of the great breakthroughs in defeating the Nazis was kept secret. This was the cracking of the German coding machine Enigma. The system for breaking the code, known as Ultra, was at the core of the most dazzling and significant deception in military history, Operation Fortitude. A joint venture of Brits and Yanks, Fortitude "made full use" of Ultra, double agents, dummy armies, phony radio traffic, and other clever measures, writes historian Stephen Ambrose in *D-Day: June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*. These actions persuaded the Germans that Allied forces were more than double their real size and that the D-Day landing would occur in Norway or Pas de Calais in France, not in Normandy. So thoroughly fooled were Hitler and his lieutenants that even when American, British, and Canadian troops hit the Normandy beaches, the Germans thought the landing was a feint and the real invasion would take place elsewhere. Without the deception, D-Day might have failed entirely, and the war been prolonged, or worse.

My point, though, is how long it was before the full story of Ultra and the massive deception became known. Something similar is happening with the story of victory over Soviet Communism in the Cold War. It is coming out in dribs and drabs: tales of daring spy flights over the Soviet Union in the late 1940s, accounts of successful economic warfare, breathtaking revelations of geostrategic bonanzas. But the whole story won't be known until reams of classified documents, particularly a string of National Security Decision Directives drafted under President Reagan, are made public years from now.

However, we've already learned enough to know that the Soviet empire didn't fall over on its own. It was pushed. We know that Strobe Talbott, President Clinton's deputy secretary of state and a former *Time* correspondent, was wrong when he wrote in 1990: "The Soviet system has gone into meltdown because of inadequacies and defects at its core, not because of anything the outside world has done or not done or threatened to do." How do we know Talbott is wrong? Common sense, for one thing. When two sides fight and one loses, chances are the winner had something to do with it. Then there's the testimony of Soviet generals, economists, and defectors to buttress this impression. And now there's Peter Schweizer's compelling, if underreported, book.

Schweizer, former fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, doesn't have a documentary record to rely on. But he's interviewed the top national security officials of the Reagan administration—Caspar Weinberger, George Shultz, Robert McFarlane, Donald Regan, John Poindexter, Ed Meese, Richard Allen, Bill Clark, et al.—and they've revealed more to Schweizer than they did in their own books. Schweizer says they've disclosed the "secret strategy" pursued by the Reagan administration in the Cold War, the strategy to roll back Communism, not merely contain it. Sorry, but I wince at the use of the word "secret." After all, the strategy—to put military, technological, political, and economic pressure on the Soviets—wasn't secret. Only parts of it were, and Schweizer deserves credit for spelling them out in compelling fashion.

Most notable was the effort to undermine the Soviet Union economically. I had not known, for instance, of CIA Director Bill Casey's relentless campaign to get Saudi Arabia to increase oil production, flood the market, and drive down oil prices. Why was Casey so eager for this? Two reasons. One, it would help the U.S. economy in the same manner as an across-the-board tax cut. Second, and more important in Casey's mind, it would ruin the Soviet economy. The Soviets relied on oil exports almost entirely for their hard currency. For every dollar drop in the price of a barrel of oil, the Soviets lost a dollar in hard currency. Thus, when the Saudis increased production from 2 million to 6 million, then to 9 million barrels a day, in 1985, it "drove a stake through the heart of the Soviet economy," writes Schweizer.

Had Casey, along with Reagan, prompted this Saudi move? "What factor lay most heavily on the minds of the Saudis when they made the decision is anybody's guess," admits Schweizer. But the administration had certainly done enough favors for the Saudi ruling family that reciprocation was in order. The Saudis had been allowed to buy AWACS radar planes. Reagan issued a special executive order that permitted a private sale to them of Stinger missiles without notifying Congress. Reagan repeatedly promised American defense of Saudi Arabia. "At one point Reagan looked the Saudi king straight in the eye and gave him his absolute assurance that he would do whatever was necessary to ensure the integrity of Saudi Arabia," says Schweizer. "It was something Reagan excelled at—a personal diplomatic gesture pregnant with meaning." Still, Schweizer isn't certain even whether oil pricing was a fundamental part of the comprehensive strategy to "exacerbate" the Soviet economic crisis. Oil pricing, he says, was "apparently codified into policy." Apparently? We'll know for sure when the presidential directives are released.

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Another eye-popping part of the Reagan strategy was the use of economic disinformation. This was news to me, and I was thrilled to learn of it. "This was a widespread program, including altered or fabricated technological information in both civilian and military areas," Schweizer writes. The information was part true, part false, with "enough truth to get Soviet engineers to take the bait and begin digesting the information and using it in their own designs, mixed with enough fiction to make their efforts ultimately fail." My favorite was the sale of blueprints for gas turbine components with a built-in engineering flaw. It caused serious delays in construction of the Soviet natural gas pipeline, thereby delaying the accrual of hard currency from gas sales.

Schweizer also runs through the administration's exploitation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, its funneling of CIA funds to Solidarity in Poland, its emphasis on high-tech weapons like the Strategic Defense Initiative, its bid to keep the Soviets from buying new technologies they couldn't produce on their own—all aimed at bringing the Soviet economy and ruling class to the breaking point. These efforts are well known. But Schweizer places them as part of an overall strategy, and that's the beauty of his valuable book. Strobe Talbott says Mikhail Gorbachev responded "primarily to internal pressures, not external ones." Schweizer explains convincingly how these internal pressures were intensified by deliberate American acts.

This is a short book, but I sometimes lost the trail. Schweizer tells the story of economic warfare chronologically, mixing it in with the evolution of SDI, recruitment of Sweden in the fight to save Solidarity, and so on. There was a better way: he should have isolated the economic strategy and followed it through to the end, then turned to a different element. One more problem: Bill Casey. Schweizer didn't interview Casey, who died in 1987, but he makes the anti-Soviet policy sound more Casey's than Reagan's. Maybe it was, but if so, we should be told explicitly. After reading *Victory*, I wasn't sure if Reagan's role was marginal or major. No doubt later, fuller accounts of the triumph over Soviet Communism will nail that down. ❐

COLORED PEOPLE: A MEMOIR

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Alfred A. Knopf/216 pages/$22

reviewed by FRANCIS X. ROCCA

"Academic superstar" may be an oxymoron, but if there is such a thing, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., is it. Cornell gave him tenure at age 33, and Harvard made him chairman of Afro-American Studies when he was 40. An avid and adept publicity seeker, he writes regularly for the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times*, and has brought his friend Spike Lee to Harvard as a visiting professor. Barely into middle age now, he's written his autobiography. But a professor's career, no matter how glittering, is humdrum stuff compared to a movie star's, or even a politician's; so readers will be grateful that this book ends before its subject ever sets foot on a university campus.

Gates's childhood coincided with the desegregation of his hometown, Piedmont, West Virginia (pop. 2,565 at his birth in 1950). The elementary school was integrated the year before he entered first grade; the union at the paper mill, not until the end of his teens. His coming-of-age story is thus also one of dramatic change in a contained, closely observed society.

The story is told through folksy anecdotes, with frequent asides on the customs and mores of family and neighbors, and this lack of a strong structure can be distracting; but it is rich territory we are rambling through, and our guide has a keen eye for trivia with retrospective significance. In a chapter on pre-Afro hair care, we learn about the brands of grease, the art of the hot comb, the inconveniences of a Murrayed-down stocking cap or a lye "process." One detail symbolizes the futility of these exertions: the "kitchen," an incorrigibly kinky tuft at the base of the neck that can only be trimmed off.

The author gets his tonsorial expertise from his mother, who used to earn extra dollars from dressing hair in her home, and who eventually went bald from having her own treated in this damaging fashion. Mrs. Gates is the book's most memorable character, with something of the tragic about her. A dignified woman, punctilious in speech and dress, she consistently encouraged her children to compete in white society. Yet she hated white people, "hated them with a passion she seldom disclosed." When TV showed the riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King, "the first colored secretary of the Piedmont PTA watched the flames with dancing eyes." She lived to see one son a surgeon and the other a prominent literary critic, yet she could not enjoy all the fruits of their success. When they bought her the grand house she had used to clean as a maid, she moved in reluctantly, haunted by the memory of a stingy and inconsiderate employer.

His mother, Gates now believes, was depressive. In her later years she also suffered debilitating obsessions and compulsions. But her ambivalence about race relations, if especially intense, was not unique. Gates—who has in recent years publicly denounced the "hate literature" published by the Nation of Islam—recalls mixed feelings when he discovered her secret loathing at age nine: "It was like watching the Wicked Witch of the West emerge out of the transforming features of Dorothy. The revelation was both terrifying and thrilling." The occasion was the telecast of a documentary on Malcolm X, whose diabolization of

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whites Mrs. Gates answered with fervent amens.

Within his family, the author encountered two opposite attitudes toward the prospect of integration. On the one hand were his clannish, severe, teetotaling Coleman uncles: hunters and handymen who had "carved out a dark-chocolate world" of their own. They clung to "colored" schools and churches as insurance of their dignity and independence, and hated the younger blacks who would abandon their world for the white one. On the other hand were the lighter-skinned Gateses of nearby Cumberland, Maryland: drinkers, Episcopalians, and socialists; graduates of Howard and Harvard. Their farm at Patterson's Creek, passed down from a white ancestor, had been sold off in the 1920s yet remained the showpiece of their proud legacy.

Young "Skip" went fishing with his holy-roller Uncle Nemo and reveled in the ebullient Coleman reunions, but he also made pilgrimages to Patterson's Creek and soaked up Gates lore. He joined the Methodist church at age twelve, giving up cards and rock 'n' roll, but two years later left its "oppressive literalisms" for the more liberal preachment of an Episcopal priest.

Ultimately Gates chose the course of his father's family, to which temperament inclined him. What else could he have done? The "dark-chocolate world" had dissolved. *Colored People* is full of reminders, if any are necessary, that this change was for the better. The author has not forgotten the humiliations of the fifties and sixties, when blacks in Piedmont could not try on clothes before they bought them, sit down to a meal at the Cut-Rate diner, or even buy the houses they lived in.

Yet the community to which these strictures confined them also offered certain pleasures and consolations. Their neighborhoods, "clearly demarcated, as if by ropes or turnstiles," were a refuge from the white domain, a comforting extension of the family home. At the Colored American Legion they could dance the Dirty Dog to the music of James Brown (when the occasional white faces appeared, their "space felt violated. . . . The rhythms were off"). Riding the train, Gates and family didn't envy the white passengers' access to the dining car; they preferred each other's company and Mrs. Gates's fried chicken.

The book closes at the scene of the last segregated mill picnic, in 1970, when "hundreds of Negroes gathered to say goodbye to themselves, their heritage, and their sole link to each other, wiped out of existence by the newly enforced anti–Jim Crow laws." Here the nostalgia that suffuses the whole book becomes most plaintive and poignant.

Obviously Gates, married to a white woman and tenured at a historically white university, does not long for a return to Jim Crow. What he evidently misses is the sense of place, both geographic and social, which in our country today is the price of freedom and prosperity. In a prefatory letter to his daughters he writes of conflicting desires, to enjoy "shared cultural intimacy" with other blacks and yet remain free "to construct identities through elective affinities . . . Bach *and* James Brown. Sushi *and* fried catfish." Increasingly, for Americans of every color, commodities must fill the place of a community that lies irretrievably in the past. ❐

GREAT CATHERINE: THE LIFE OF CATHERINE THE GREAT, EMPRESS OF RUSSIA

Carolly Erickson

Crown / 392 pages / $25

reviewed by FLORENCE KING

Would you want your sister to marry Grand Duke Peter of Russia? Someone actually asked Frederick the Great this question. His answer was no, but his fastidious chivalry did not extend to other men's sisters. Prussia needed stronger ties with Russia, and nubile princesses were the chief export of the many tiny German states that Frederick controlled. Fifteen-year-old Sophie of Anhalt-Zerbst seemed like the best bet, and so he tossed her to the Romanovs.

Peter, the 16-year-old future czar, accepted the passably pretty Sophie, but she was definitely not his type. He liked his women lame, scarred, or one-eyed, but what really turned him on were hunchbacks. He also seems to have had Tourette's syndrome. Prone to sudden grimaces and twitches, he bellowed obscenities at court levees and laughed maniacally in church. Though puny and girlish, he imagined himself a great military commander and practiced heroic maneuvers with his vast collection of toy soldiers; when a rat gnawed on one, he court-martialed the rodent and executed it on a makeshift gallows in the royal apartments.

His aunt, Empress Elizabeth, was the daughter of Peter the Great by his second wife. The throne had originally passed to her infant cousin, Ivan VI, but Elizabeth overthrew him, imprisoned him in a remote fortress, and then spent the rest of her life worrying that someone would overthrow her. Insomnia joined paranoia when she found a barrel of gunpowder under her bed. Thereafter she thought to foil assassins by sleeping in a different room each night, but, too afraid to sleep, she made her ladies tickle her feet to keep her awake. Her superstitiousness was the despair of her ministers; she refused to read state docu-

Florence King is a regular columnist for National Review. *Her first book,* Southern Ladies and Gentlemen, *published in 1975, was recently reissued in paperback by St. Martin's Press.*

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nents if they happened to brush against one of the many holy relics on her desk; and once, when a fly landed on a treaty, she refused to sign it.

She developed a sudden, obsessive interest in lunatics after seeing a servant go mad and foam at the mouth. She turned part of her palace into a small private asylum and stocked it with inmates from her court, which, not surprisingly, yielded quite a few: a monk who castrated himself, an equerry who thought the Shah of Persia was God, and two guards officers who lost it.

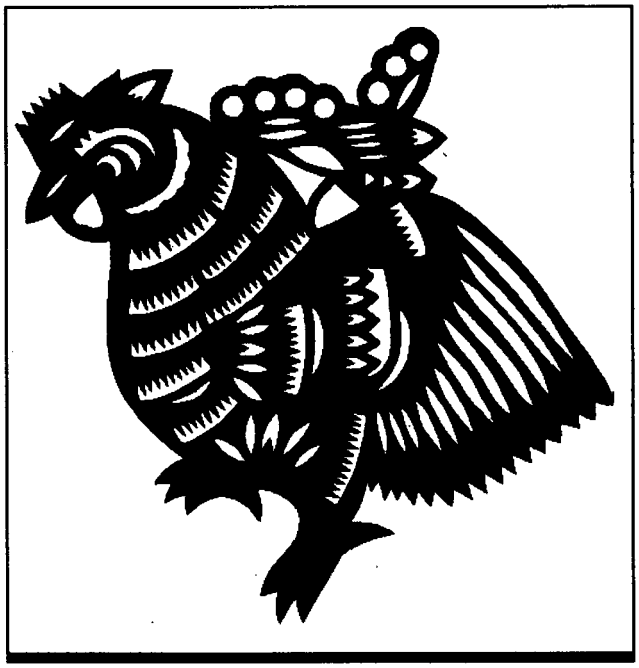
Sophie did not know what to make of this wildly eccentric empress, who terrified her one moment and overwhelmed her with smarmy affection the next. Her orderly Germanic nature shrank from the chaos on which Elizabeth thrived and her businesslike Lutheran soul was repelled by the spectacle of government by omen and portent. A little voice in her head told her that this was no way to rule an empire, and gradually, almost without realizing it, she began to dream and plan.

In 1745, Sophie converted to Orthodox Christianity, changed her name to Catherine and married Peter, but whether their union was ever consummated is still debated. All we know for sure is that he made her dress in a hussar's uniform and stand sentry all night at their bedroom door. Still, she got pregnant, perhaps by Sergei Saltykov, but she miscarried when fire destroyed the imperial palace. Pregnant a second time, she gave birth to a son, Paul, but the empress took the baby away from her and raised him herself. Meanwhile, Peter found a pockmarked mistress and Catherine was left to her own devices.

"Where another woman might have gone mad or succumbed to illness or depression," writes Carolly Erickson, "Catherine retired to a small, ill-lit chamber and began to read." Like today's conservatives who turn to Albert Jay Nock and Irving Babbitt as an antidote to Billary 'R' Us, she fought down the unnerving influences of Elizabeth and Peter with the philosophers of the French Enlightenment. It was a meeting of minds. Catherine, who was nothing if not well-adjusted, recognized in the works of Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Diderot the same instinct for the rational that she herself possessed in such abundance.

Erickson disputes the claims of some historians that Catherine went native and became more Russian than a Cossack. On the contrary, she was repelled by eastern Slav mysticism. It was

> not an honest piety, of the kind Catherine favored, but the darker sort of religion that led to intolerance, irrationality and mental aberrations. . . . Endless processions, day-long rituals, the mad ringing of the thousands of bells created an atmosphere, not so much of otherworldliness as of murky illogic, inhospitable to the concrete and the commonsensical; in Moscow, reason withered under the icy blast of the supernatural.



Catherine intended to change all this, but her plans to reign as a liberal philosopher-empress soon foundered on the shoals of Russian reality. No sooner had she murdered her husband and assumed his throne than impostors claiming to be the dead Peter III sprouted like weeds, leaving millions of hysterical peasants writhing. Then came an attempt to overthrow Catherine and crown the imprisoned and by now ga-ga Ivan VI. Next a Cossack revolt led by Emelian Pugachev, who surged around the country wearing a lace-trimmed red caftan and brandishing a silver axe.

It's bracing to watch Catherine's liberalism fade. She gave orders to Ivan VI's guards to kill him if anyone tried to liberate him. Someone did, and the guards killed him:

> She had discovered first hand how government must assert its primacy over chaos by force alone; all considerations of public good and individual liberty had to be secondary. Absolute power demanded ironclad obduracy toward traitors. Unwavering sternness alone could protect her. . . . [The peasants] were not a docile and devoted collection of willing learners, waiting to be led into the light, but an ugly combustible mass of haters, seething with murderous rage, ready to avenge themselves on their betters.

Carolly Erickson has written a highly readable biography, sometimes too readable. It occasionally reads like a novel, as when she turns passages from Catherine's memoirs into bodice-ripper dialogue. There are no notes, and she avoids discussion of the operation that may have been performed on Peter to enable him to father Paul. She states flatly that Paul was the son of Sergei Saltykov, ignoring that both Paul and his son, Alexander I, displayed several of Peter's most arresting characteristics.

Most commendably, however, she rescues Catherine from the charge of wantonness, arguing persuasively that she had only five lovers, and that the young men of her later life assuaged not her lust but her frustrated maternalism:

> With Catherine, work always came first . . . she arranged her life so that she greeted each morning with a clear head and, if possible, a serene mind. She liked to go to bed early, to read for a while, or do a bit of needlework, then settle down for the night. She needed and craved love, but she was unwilling to let love tyrannize her or upset the balance and order of her life—at least, not for long. ❐

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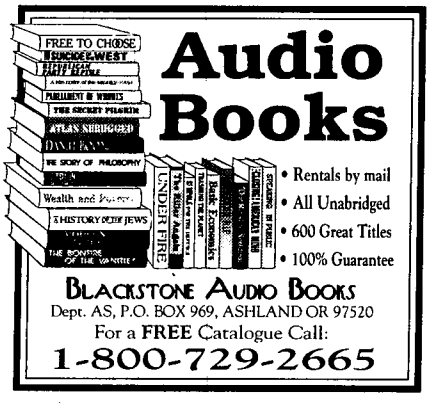

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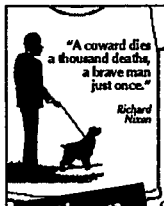

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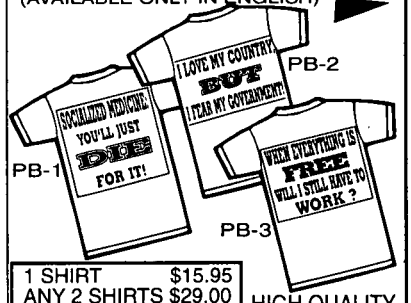
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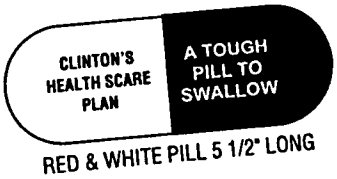

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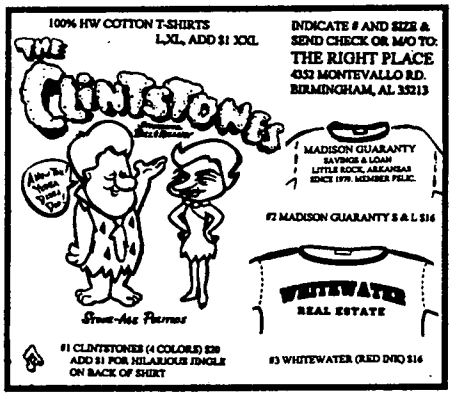
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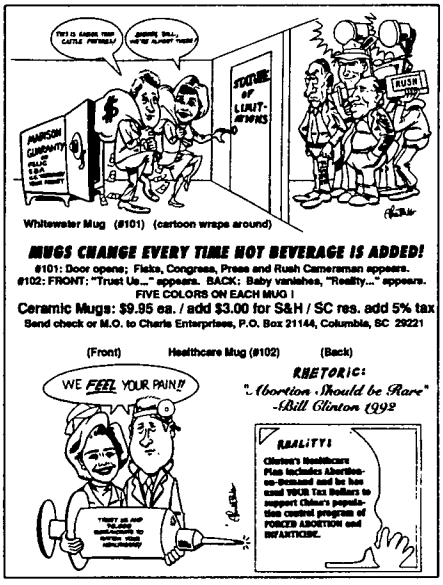
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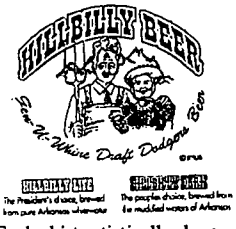
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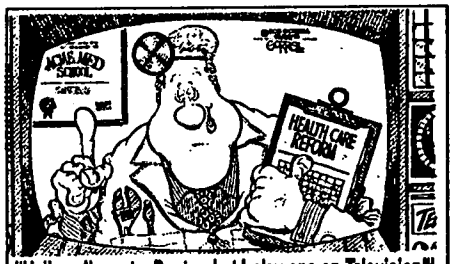

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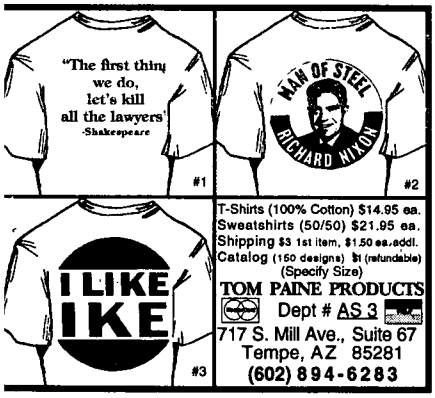

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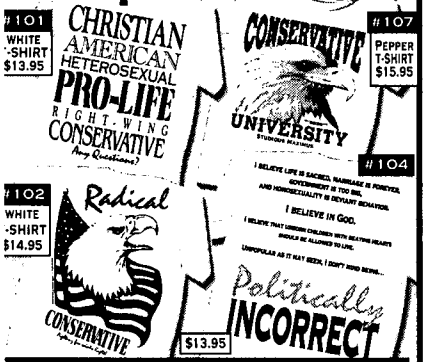

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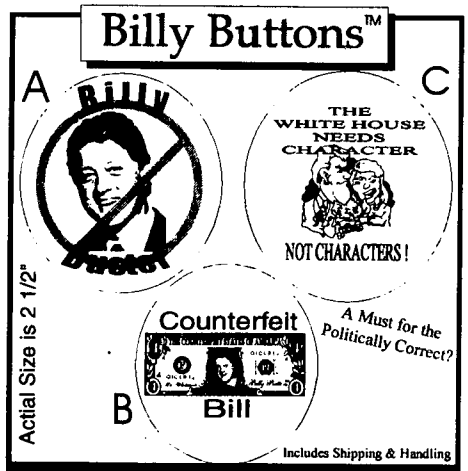

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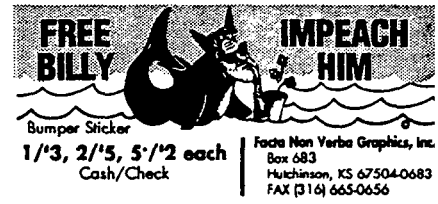

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CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 11)

at the 34th Precinct during the famous "Toys for Guns" buyback program back in November 1993, I can report that the categories listed in all the print media reports were inaccurate and misleading. My business was to assist publications such as yours with weapons technical information. Having identified thousands of firearms, I am qualified to state that no Title 2, Class 3 firearms ("submachine guns") were included in the surrendered group. . . .

The collection did include several semiautomatic pistols, including a few of the designated weapons that are presently on New York Governor Mario Cuomo's list of firearms to be banned from private possession in New York State. Of the four weapons designated by police officials as machine pistols, both TEC-9s and the M-11 were in fact semiautomatic pistols; the lone Uzi carbine was an older version, but was still a closed bolt semiautomatic.

Mr. Yost's observations paralleled those of the officers present that day. The people were taking advantage of the program by turning in garbage and walking out with $100 gift certificates. . . . Most of the officers present stated in hushed tones that the weapons turned in were not the ones out on the street doing the carnage and that the only time a "gun with a body on it" would be turned in is when the shooter disposes of the weapon. It was reported that none of the surrendered firearms were ballistics-tested to see if they were ever used in a crime before they were destroyed (dumped at sea), which made the "Toys For Guns" a perfect place to dispose of a weapon and not get caught.

—Drew Parmerton, Director
Special Weapons and
Tactics Information Group
New York, New York

Trial Lawyer for the Trial Lawyers

A recent column in your magazine ("A Winning Drive," by Grover G. Norquist, *TAS*, March 1994) turns common sense on its head. The author states that allowing motorists to waive the right to recover noneconomic damages and look to first-party insurance would "make the roads safer, by eliminating perverse incentives." . . . In reality, motorists have a strong incentive to obey the rules of the road and proceed with care when they are legally accountable to others for their behavior behind the wheel. Yet, in those states that have adopted first-party insurance, no such incentive exists. That's because the safe driver who has the misfortune of crossing paths with a negligent driver can only seek compensation from his or her own insurer. The negligent driver, *even if grossly negligent* or reckless, also looks to his or her own insurer. How on earth does such an arrangement promote safe driving? . . .

The column takes aim at other civil justice issues, but likewise misses the mark. . . . As for Peter Huber's "seminal work" on liability costs, it has been excoriated by scholars as flawed in analysis and so factually distorted as to border on intellectual fraud. For example, Judge Roger Miner of the 2d U.S Circuit Court of Appeals has stated that Huber's "$300 billion figure has been demonstrated to be a product of casual speculation and not derived in any sense from investigative or statistical analysis." By comparison, the Rand Institute for Civil Justice estimated total liability costs at $29 billion to $36 billion in 1985.

The assertion that America has 70 percent of the world's lawyers is simply a discredited relic of the 1992 presidential campaign. This figure was derived by comparing the number of lawyers engaged exclusively in conducting trials in Japan, England, and Wales with general practice attorneys in the United States. The per capita number of lawyers in Japan, England, Wales, and the United States actually is very similar, according to Ray August, a business law professor who has researched the issue. . . .

—Barry J. Nace, President
Trial Lawyers of America
Washington, D.C.

The Two Stanleys

An otherwise fine example of investigative reporting by James Ring Adams, "Ferraro and Whitewater" (*TAS*, June 1994), was marred by his misidentification of a key player in the Democratic Party machine in the Bronx in the mid-1980s. Stanley Friedman wasn't Bronx borough president but Democratic borough chairman. As such, he wielded considerable influence and was regarded by many as the de facto borough president. The actual president, Stanley Simon, not untouched by corruption himself, was also the recipient of a prison sentence.

—James J. McDonnell
Killeen, Texas

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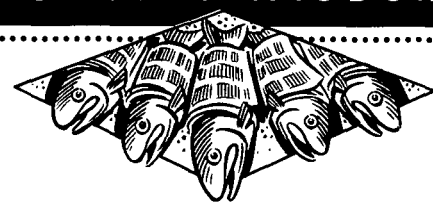

Village Voice

Spielberg's road to capitalism:

It goes back to the central fact that the film is not about Jews or, arguably, even the Holocaust. . . . It's a movie about Clinton. It's about the benign aspects of capitalism—Capitalism With a Human Face. We're in Ayn Rand country: the Businessman as hero. Capitalism can give us a health care program, and it can give us a Schindler.

[March 29, 1994]

The Reporter

(Landsdale, PA)

Miss Ms. Judi Talbot, Pennsylvania NOW PAC board member, admits she doesn't like to recycle or save the animals:

Why is it that reasonable people understand why feminists aren't jumping to the bait of the Paula Jones case? Anything Cliff Jackson, Dave Brock, the *American Spectator* and other right-wing extremists are behind reeks of rotten garbage.

This is just another attempt to divide and conquer, but this time it isn't working. This is just another ploy to bring down Clinton, bait the feminists and cloud the real issues. If anything with an ounce of integrity stood behind this, we would all take a second look.

Isn't it time the press and citizens question the motives of this group of vigilantes? First they had Gennifer Flowers with zero credibility and enough holes in her story to make tons of Swiss cheese. Next came the troopers who themselves are proven crooks, who tried to pull off an insurance scam. Then we had Whitewater, which has fizzled to a ripple and has, so far, only shown that the Clintons did what so many Conservatives have done. . . .

Where is our illustrious Senator Specter in all this? With his great leadership abilities, he should be able to control these rats.

If they want to get Clinton, find something he has done that is damaging to the country. Don't damage the country yourselves. It could turn around and bite you in the fleshy parts!

[May 17, 1994]

Flyer

(Change of Heart, Inc., Austin, TX)

Announcing a new role for the Yellow Rose of Texas:

Austin healing woman and spiritual counselor Shamaan Ochaum had a vision of the Mother asking us to use roses to pray for peace, gather their petals, and drop them from the air over Bosnia. When the petals hit the ground, the ice in the men's eyes will melt.

Please bring roses or send envelopes full of petals to this address: 227 Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701

[Spring 1994]

Northeastern University Magazine

An example of the tortuous thought process apparently admired by the editors of this venerable alumni magazine:

While perusing the January magazine, my wife came upon the advertisement on pages one and two. The first page read: "What has 250,000 feet and a multibillion dollar income?" The next page provided the answer: "The 125,000 graduates of Northeastern University." My wife asked me if I thought there was anything wrong with the advertisement. After thinking about it, I realized that it should really have read: "What has 250,001 feet and a multibillion dollar income?" I have a spare leg in the closet.

I realize that sometimes it is easy to forget people are disabled because they don't fit a certain image. . . . The point is, there are many "disabled" graduates of Northeastern. I use quotes because we are all "disabled" in one manner or another, even if the "disability" is only placing mental or physical limitations on others. It's stunning that today, even after passing of legislation such as the Americans With Disabilities Act, this publication would alienate a portion of the population with an advertisement of this type. I'm not offended, but I can understand how other people might be.

—Patrick M. Pickle, BA '91
Mesa, Arizona

[March 1994]

The Nation

An unusually ingenuous editorialis explains why it was all right to defam Judge Clarence Thomas:

The Jones affair is not an Anita Hill reru any more than Lani Guanier was Judg Bork turned on his swelled head. The Hil case drew its political resonance from th boneheaded attitude of the all-male Senat Judiciary Committee—and from Clarenc Thomas's record as a Reaganite.

[May 30, 1994]

New Republic

A pack of check-kiters, real-estate flip pers, sex-harassers, fast-money chaser and liars as seen by Miss Martha Gellhorn, believer in endless Nev Deals and other Liberal delusions:

For the first time in forty-nine years believe that we have a president and hi wife who are the spiritual heirs of th Roosevelts. The Clintons are young; they cannot yet compare to the Roosevelts i experience and wisdom. But they hav the same aims as the Roosevelts, th same sense of duty to all the people, th same kind of vision for America President Clinton inherited a nation i deep social disarray and an economy endangered by a colossal public debt. thought, with joy, that here was a man helped by a brilliant principled wife, wh had the brain, the courage and the will t change America, to set it again on a long lost path.

It is heartbreaking that this promis should be dimmed by a band of mean littl minds. It is unforgivable that the serious press has not recognized this promise, thi chance for the country, and stood behin the Clintons. I keep hoping for a grass roots groundswell of outrage at the tactic of the Clinton enemies. I keep hoping for a latter-day Ed Murrow, who took on Senato Joe McCarthy, to take on this malignan campaign against the Clintons. And wh knows, that just might actually happen.

[June 27, 1994]

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Rolling Stone

Dr. Hunter S. Thompson reports from the golf course:

Richard Nixon is gone now, and I am poorer for it. He was the real thing—a political monster straight out of Grendel and a very dangerous enemy. He could shake your hand and stab you in the back at the same time. He lied to his friends and betrayed the trust of his family. Not even Gerald Ford, the unhappy ex-president who pardoned Nixon and kept him out of prison, was immune to the evil fallout. Ford, who believes strongly in Heaven and Hell, has told more than one of his celebrity golf partners that "I know I will go to hell, because I pardoned Richard Nixon."

[June 16, 1994]

Los Angeles Daily News

On the correspondence page of the illustrious *News*, another L.A. metaphysician lets out a learned yawp for octopus justice:

This letter is written in response to the April 14 article that informed us of Octavia the Octopus's death.

I am absolutely enraged that such a careless accident was allowed to happen. I am no expert, but even I am aware of the octopus's agility and perseverance. That drain must have been a constant focus point for an octopus forced to live in a much too small tank, and whose full attention must have focused on getting out of that "trap."

Octopuses are very determined and intelligent creatures, and to be faced with such a desperate situation would only heighten these characteristics. Octavia felt she must escape and return to her home at any cost. She never would have given up.

An animal with that kind of drive and determination surely must be classified as a cognizant being, and as such has the same rights and freedoms to which we are all entitled. . . .

I feel great anger and sadness at this beautiful animal's unfortunate encounter with humans. Organizations who purport to be "pro-animal" should, at the very least, live up to the responsibilities inherent in such a claim and show the respect and concern that all living beings have a right to. Institutions such as the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium need to devote themselves to the study and understanding of the world which we co-occupy with so many others.

—Susan Ellas
La Crescenta

[April 24, 1994]

San Francisco Examiner

Ruth Rosen, whom no one should confuse with Martha Gellhorn, heaves a metaphor from the Golden Gate Bridge:

What we are witnessing is the moral equivalent of a coup d'etat. Instead of bullets, President Clinton's enemies are using character assassination as their weapon of choice.

And the media, to their shame, have taken the bait and been manipulated by his political enemies. When an elected president is assassinated—whether by bullets or by dirty tricks—our democratic institutions are weakened, even endangered.

When American editors decided to publish Paula Jones' lurid allegations against Clinton, they took a nosedive into tabloid sensationalism from which none of us will recover. . . . I don't shock easily, but I found myself gasping in astonishment.

[May 23, 1994]

New Yorker

An inside source warns of the most dangerous conspiracy since the Swiss bankers took over the Roman Catholic Church, the British royal family, and all the Ford automobile dealerships south of the Mason-Dixon line:

"The Paula Jones issue is simply a current issue they can use to tie together their talk-show network, their mail, and this undereducated-male anger, and turn it into cash. Fear and cash, fear and cash. . . . When it's over and Paula Jones loses, they'll blame the courts and slick lawyering, and they'll be back in on something else. They have hit on a good thing. They have the face of evil in Bill and Hillary Clinton. They will keep aiming at that until it no longer pays. The sad part is seeing these right-wingers as jokes. They're not silly. You can't follow their lawyer trail easily, you can't follow their money trail easily. This is water-moccasin-style politics. It's silent and deadly. You don't see it coming until it strikes."

[June 20, 1994]

The White House

After Our President's Normandy triumph, the Dog Patch crowd resumes statecraft as usual:

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL STAFF WHO STAYED ON THE USS GEORGE WASHINGTON

FROM: ISABELLE R. TAPIA
MICHAEL R. LUFRANO
OFFICE OF SCHEDULING AND ADVANCE

RE: Reimbursement for Items Removed from the Ship

The executive officer of the USS George Washington has relayed that a number of items were removed from Staterooms on the ship during the White House visit. The following items are unaccounted for:

13 Blue Towels with GW Insignia . . $11 each
4 GW Bathrobes with Insignia . . .$35 each
12 Plain White Bathrobes . . . . . $15 each
55 White Towels . . . . . $ 1.80 each

As you know, the ship and the U.S. Navy served as our gracious hosts during this trip. They provided these items for our use, not as souvenirs. They have requested reimbursement of $562 from the White House for the above items.

If you are responsible for removing one or more of these items from the ship, please remit payment to Michael Lufrano in Room 185 of the OEOB. Make any checks payable to the USS George Washington. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call either of us at 456-7560 or Capt. Rogers at 456-2150.

[June 16, 1994]

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I'll Trade You Anna Quindlen

by Byron York

Recently a woman I work with attended a fund-raising dinner held by the Women's Campaign Fund. The next day, I noticed what looked like baseball cards on her desk. Then I took a closer look. The pictures weren't Ken Griffey, Jr., or Kirby Puckett; they were Carol Moseley-Braun and Anna Quindlen. The cards featured biographical sketches on the back, referring to the subjects as "Carol" and "Anna." Despite my suspicions, there was no indication they were a joke.

A small note said the cards were produced by the Ms. Foundation for Women. When I called the foundation, Redina Jackson, project assistant for the "Take Our Daughters to Work" campaign, told me Ms. officials had noticed there are no trading cards devoted specifically to women. "We wanted to have something that little girls could identify with," she said. "So they can have dreams."

The trading card project features more than seventy "Women of Honor." In addition to Moseley-Braun and Quindlen, the list includes Patricia Schroeder, Barbara Boxer, Wendy Wasserstein, Geraldine Ferraro, Angela Davis, Maya Angelou, Gloria Steinem, Alice Walker, Patty Murray, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, Marlo Thomas, Queen Latifah, Judy Blume, Salt 'N' Pepa, Lily Tomlin, Betty Shabazz, and Ann E. Bancroft (according to her card, "Ann, an out lesbian, is the first woman ever to travel to the North and South poles").

Despite the variety of careers and sexual preferences, the group seemed a little one-dimensional. Did Ms. think any of America's girls might dream of becoming politicians, writers, entertainers, and explorers—but not liberal Democrats? How did Ms. decide who made the list and who didn't?

"What we put first," said Marie Wilson, president of the foundation, "was making sure we had enough African-American, Latina, disabled, and other minority women." Diversity had to be a top priority, she explained, because the trading card project was designed to give girls a wide range of role models.

I then read her a list of women—Jeane Kirkpatrick, Elizabeth Dole, Mary Matalin, Kennedy (the flamboyantly Republican MTV jock), Susan Molinari, Lynn Martin, and Christine Todd Whitman—mainstream figures all. How about them? "Many of those are very good names," Wilson said. But there was a problem—diversity. Republicans, and conservatives in general, didn't make the list, according to Wilson, not because the foundation excluded them for political reasons, but because "so many of them are white." (A trait that did not prevent Schroeder, Boxer, Ferraro, Murray, Wasserstein, Steinem, Quindlen, Thomas, Blume, and many others from being selected.)

Wilson told me she admires Dole and Martin, among others. They might, she said, make it onto the list if the foundation creates a second edition of trading cards. And if that day comes, the last minority—the conservative woman, regardless of her race—will finally be welcomed into the Ms. fold. ❐

Byron York is a television producer and writer in Washington.

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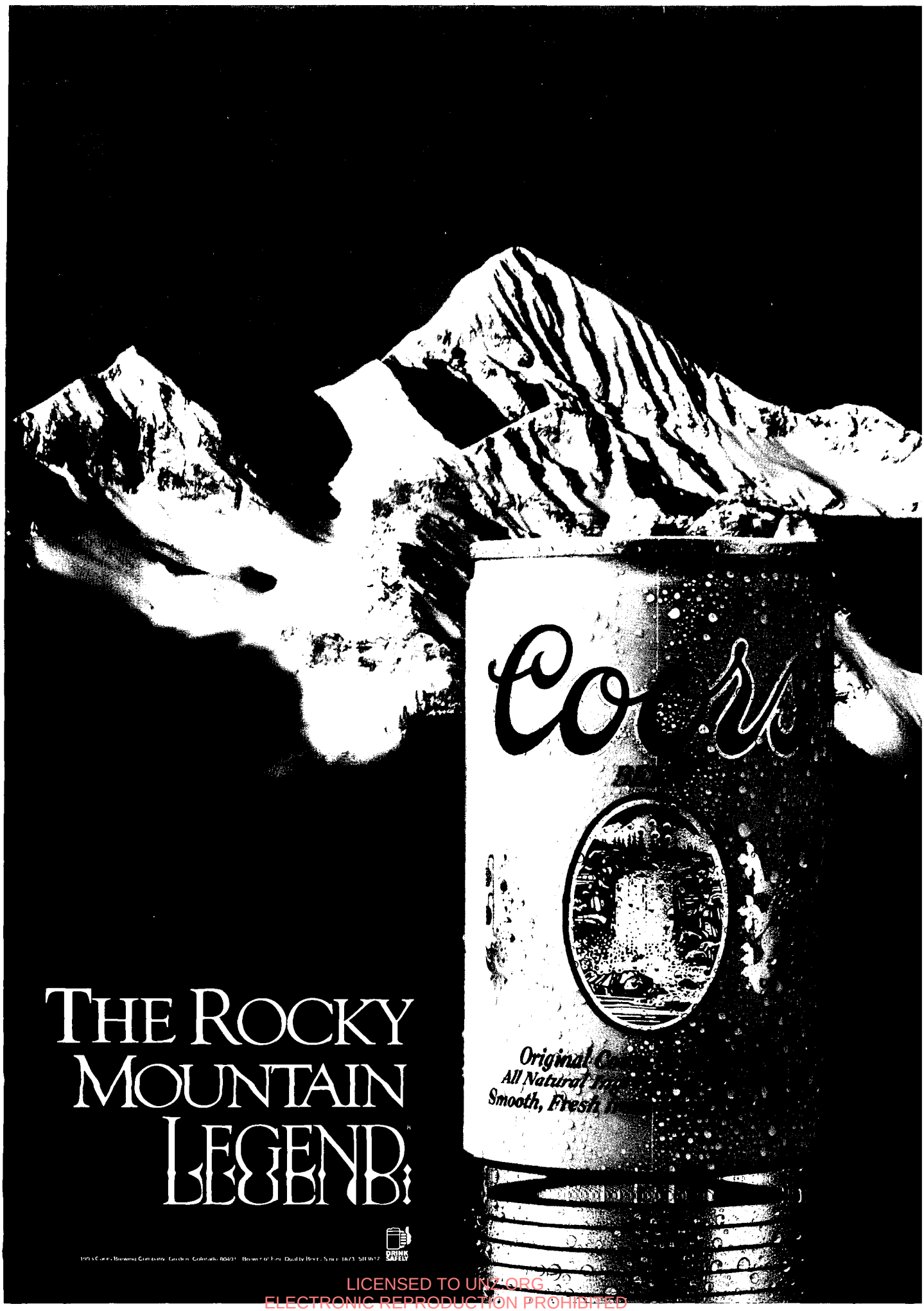

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